

TENTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

# AFRICANUS JOURNAL

Vol. 10 No. 2 | NOVEMBER 2018



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## Goals of the *Africanus Journal*

The *Africanus Journal* is an award-winning interdisciplinary biblical, theological, and practical journal of the Center for Urban Ministerial Education (CUME). Its goals are to promote:

- a. the mission and work of the members and mentors of the Africanus Guild Ph.D. Research Program of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston;
- b. the principles of the Africanus Guild (evangelical orthodox Christian men and women who are multicultural, multiracial, urban-oriented, studying a Bible without error in a cooperative way);
- c. Christian scholarship that reflects an evangelical perspective, as an affiliate of GCTS-Boston. This is an interdisciplinary journal that publishes high quality articles in areas such as biblical studies, theology, church history, religious research, case studies, and studies related to practical issues in urban ministry. Special issues are organized according to themes or topics that take seriously the contextual nature of ministry situated in the cultural, political, social, economic, and spiritual realities in the urban context.

Scholarly papers may be submitted normally by those who have or are in (or are reviewed by a professor in) a Th.M., D.Min., Ed.D., Th.D., ST.D., Ph.D., or equivalent degree program.

Two issues normally are published per year. <http://www.gordonconwell.edu/resources/Africanus-Journal.cfm>

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## Life of Julius Africanus

Julius Africanus was probably born in Jerusalem, many scholars think around A.D. 200. Africanus was considered by the ancients as a man of consummate learning and sharpest judgment (*Ante-Nicene Fathers* 6:128). He was a pupil of Heracles, distinguished for philosophy and other Greek learning, in Alexandria, Egypt around A.D. 231–233. In A.D. 220/226, he performed some duty in behalf of Nicopolis (formerly Emmaus) in Palestine. Later he likely became bishop of Emmaus (Eusebius, *History*, VI.xxxi.2). Origen calls him “a beloved brother in God the Father, through Jesus Christ, His holy Child” (*Letter from Origen to Africanus* 1). Fellow historian Eusebius distinguishes him as “no ordinary historian” (*History*, I. vi.2). Eusebius describes the five books of *Chronologies* as a “monument of labor and accuracy” and cites extensively from his harmony of the evangelists’ genealogies (*History*, VI. xxxi. 1–3). Africanus was a careful historian who sought to defend the truth of the Bible. He is an ancient example of meticulous, detailed scholarship which is historical, biblical, truthful, and devout.

Even though Eusebius describes Africanus as the author of the *Kestoi*, Jerome makes no mention of this (*ANF* 6:124). The author of *Kestoi* is surnamed Sextus, probably a Libyan philosopher who arranged a library in the Pantheon at Rome for the Emperor. The *Kestoi* was probably written toward the end of the 200s. It was not written by a Christian since it contains magical incantations (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri* III.412).

The Greek text of Africanus’ writings may be found in Martinus Josephus Routh, *Reliquiae sacrae* II (New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1974 [1846]), 225–309, and Martin Wallraff, Umberto Roberto, Karl Pinggéra, eds., William Adler, trans., *Iulius Africanus Chronographiae: The Extant Fragments, Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller* 15 (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007).

The extant writings of Julius Africanus may be found in vol. 1, no 1, April 2009 edition of the *Africanus Journal*.

## Other Front Matter

*Editorial Team for the issue:* J. Saemi Kim, Seong Park, Nicole Rim, John Runyon, Aida Besançon Spencer, William David Spencer

### Resources

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### Summary of Content

Our tenth anniversary issue is a reader of representative articles that show the sweep of *Africanus Journal*’s interests over the first decade of its existence. This is not a “Best Of” collection, since every article we publish has merit and strives for excellence. The ones we included are a “readers’ choice” collection, nominated by staff and contributor participants as articles of continuing impact or ones singled out for notice by other organizations. Our opening selections address two ongoing issues in Bible scholarship in regard to the handling of the biblical text. The second category addresses social issues,

the first two domestic, assessing the ongoing enigma of random violence in the United States, the third global, considering the present and future of the Christian Faith in China. The third category are ethical issues. Our first article explores the challenge of the moral dimension of artificial intelligence (which earned the author an invitation to speak at a conference on human/robotic interfacing at the University of Leiden), the second an evangelistic consideration of adapting a non-violent diet, followed by a book review on an important work on media (representing our journal's interest in the arts). Both of these final pieces won awards from the Evangelical Press Association.

# THE AFRICANUS GUILD



L to R: Quonekuia Day, Mark Chuanhang Shan, Jennifer Creamer

*“If not for the Africanus Guild, I would not even think of getting a Ph.D. and would not have had the chance to teach my own course at Gordon-Conwell, and be trained to be a Bible teacher, and for this I am most grateful.” –Benjamin Fung*

Benjamin Fung's Ph.D. was received from North-West University in South Africa 2017  
Quonekuia Day and Mark Shan are Ph.D. candidates with London School of Theology.  
Jennifer Creamer received her Ph.D. from North-West University in 2016.

The Africanus Guild is a support program set up to assist selective, underrepresented constituencies to pursue research Ph.D.s from North-West University and London School of Theology. The Guild is especially oriented to the multicultural, multiracial urban scene. Accepted students are mentored by a Gordon-Conwell faculty member. Candidates may complete the Th.M. at the Boston campus and then apply to the Guild.



# Earning the Right to Be Published

LES STOBBE

Ever since God created Adam and Eve, our task as God's followers has been to express the creative calling He gave them. Yet, if we create and no one knows about it, we may have a wonderful sculpture, painting, article or book (even web site) and still not be His messenger. The message encapsulated in what we have created has to get to at least one other person for us to fulfill God's calling. For writers, I call that "Earning the Right to Be Published," for publishing is one of God's ways of passing on His creative message.

So what earned Jerry Jenkins and Tim LaHaye the right to be published in the *Left Behind* series, with more than 60 million *Left Behind* adult and teen books sold? Consumers bought more copies of *Desecration*, the ninth book in the series in three months than any novel, secular or religious, in the first year. By the summer of 2001, more than 5,000 people had sent letters to the publisher and authors saying they had accepted Christ after reading one of the books.

And what earned Bruce Wilkinson and Dave Kopp the right to be published as *The Prayer of Jabez*? That book sold more copies the first year of publication than any non-fiction book ever in the known history of publishing—three million more copies than the nearest candidate, the book by Oprah Winfrey's cook. We're talking eight million copies in the first year.

That means in 2002, secular magazines, including *Publishers Weekly* and *New York Times*, had to swallow their pride and report that two religious books, one of them religious fiction and the other religious non-fiction, outsold every other book released by the big New York houses that year.

You don't have to consider the *Left Behind* series great literature—thousands of writers don't, feeling quite confident they could write better fiction. And you don't have to agree with Bruce Wilkinson's central thesis in *The Prayer of Jabez* to appreciate what God has done with that little book in shaking up the establishment, both Christian and non-Christian, in publishing.

Then another upstart began showing muscle. *The Purpose Driven Life* was a sequel to Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Church*. Sales exploded. Then Rick and his people developed the *40 Days of Study of The Purpose Driven Life* and pushed it into churches for use in developing small groups. Sales jumped to two million a month.

If you talk to Jerry Jenkins, Bruce Wilkinson, Rick Warren, or their publishers, they all say, "It's a God thing." And they are right.

Now if it's a God thing, why think about it in terms of "earning the right to be published"? Let's consider *The Prayer of Jabez*. For 30 years, Bruce Wilkinson gave messages on that prayer. He even put it on tape and offered it for sale. Bruce took time to write a major book on the Prayer of Jabez—what the prayer meant to him was that important. Fifteen publishers turned him down and it sat on a shelf or in a drawer for years. Somehow Multnomah got involved and assigned David Kopp to the project and he produced the 92-page version. A writer became involved, a writer who knew what the Gospel writer Luke learned in the first decades after Christ's death, as described in Luke 1:1-4:

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4, NASB)

What do I see in these verses that earned Luke the right to be published? Let me list the reasons first and then elaborate on them.

1. Luke had a target reader clearly in mind...Theophilus.
2. Luke did market research to determine what was already available on the topic.
3. Luke did additional research to discover the true facts about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.
4. Luke selected and organized his materials for maximum impact on the reader.
5. Luke had a clear purpose for writing his book and constantly kept that in mind.

Now let's examine these five reasons more closely.

### 1. Luke Had a Target Reader Clearly in Mind

Take a look at verse three. What is the name of the target reader? Theophilus.

What mental images arise when you see that name? The name tells us that Theophilus was a Greek. In addition, based on the period when Luke wrote this Gospel, I think I'm safe in assuming he was a new Christian. (He did not yet know "the exact truth" of what he had "been taught.")

Now, if you had been writing a book for a Greek, what kind of book would you have written? I think I might have been tempted to say, "All Greeks are philosophers, so I'll write an *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, as Josh McDowell and his associates did, or possibly *Mere Christianity*, as C.S. Lewis did." I would have been tempted to load it with quotations from Greek philosophers that revealed the emptiness of their philosophy and the superiority of Christ's philosophy.

Yet, Luke did exactly the opposite of that. He stayed clear of a tightly-reasoned philosophical treatise, instead compiling what is largely a book of stories about Jesus, interspersing it with pithy sayings by Jesus and parables told by Jesus.

Philip Yancey writes in his book, *Soul Survivor: How My Faith Survived the Church*, "Reading Tolstoy and Dostoevsky transformed my view of what can be conveyed in words. I had read many books of theology and apologetics, with some profit but much frustration. . . . Yet as I read the two Russians, the core of Christian truth penetrated me more deeply. I learned the power of story, of truth being expressed in an embodied form, inarguably, incontestably. Concepts like grace and forgiveness, which constitute the core of the gospel, get little play in many theology books. I began to grasp why Jesus relied so strongly on story."

Ever hear someone criticize a book by saying, "That's just a bunch of anecdotes. He may be able to tell a good story, but I really would prefer some meaty content?"

I can just imagine the book review editor of the *Corinthian Times* saying, "We really don't need another book of experiences. We're having enough trouble with people who think the Christian life is all experience, and here's Luke giving us all these experiences of the disciples who were with Jesus."

Yet because Luke had his reader clearly in mind, he was not a bit worried about any criticism of his book of stories. You see, they are actual accounts about

- Jesus at work in the lives of people;
- People dominated by Satan who needed Jesus to release them;
- The way God built His kingdom.

Consider the story found in Luke 10:10-37, commonly described as the story of the Good Samaritan. What makes this story worthy of being published, remembering that Luke is writing to a new Christian who is Greek?

Here are some reasons I see as I study the story:

- a. Being attacked by robbers was and is a common occurrence, providing instant reader identification.
- b. It evokes a strong emotional response among readers. They get angry at the thieves who beat the man, feel strong sympathy for the beaten man, and again get angry at the religious leaders passing by on the other side. Finally, they rejoice at the Samaritan stopping to help the beaten man.
- c. The story provides both a negative and a positive role model. The negative role models are the religious leaders who pass by, while the positive role model is the Samaritan.
- d. The story travels well cross-culturally, giving it a universal appeal. Religious leaders of all cultures have similar attitudes--and help often comes from the most despised in society.
- e. The hero is not a Jew. In fact, he is from among the downtrodden, awakening the reader's sympathy and a desire to imitate his actions.
- f. It is application-oriented, with specific action illustrated. So it is not merely a laying on of guilt.

Imagine the story stopping after the Levite had gone by. Great for someone who uses guilt as a motivator. Instead, Jesus ends the story on a positive note of hope--the beaten man is well taken care of in an inn while the Samaritan goes about his business.

The story is also highly personal, since it touches each of us at our own point of need. Some of you are speakers, and I'm sure you do what I do when I address a crowd. I find the really responsive two or three and speak to them. I realized early that if you speak at the mass of people you lose all of them, but focus on two or three and you start getting results.

Clearly, the story is a communication tool without peer. That is why Matthew, speaking of Jesus, writes, "He did not speak to them without a parable" (Matt 13:34 NASB). Mark confirms that Jesus never spoke to those listening to him without including a parable, stories as we call them, in 4:34.

Art Fetting, an international banquet and sales motivational speaker who made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ in the 1970s, told an international Toastmaster's convention in Toronto, "Somebody in this audience needs me. And I'm going to touch one life today. That's my goal. I'm going to touch one life today. And that's the goal I have every time I get up in front of an audience. I say, 'There's one guy that's ready out there.'"

My goal as a writer and literary agent is to change lives through the books I write or represent. If we are going to do that, we need the same focus on one life that needs to be changed.

I remember talking to Margaret Jensen about her target reader when she began work on the manuscript for *Violets for Mr. B*. She said she wanted to reach nurses who were defeated and negative, making them laugh at some of the funny things that occur in nursing as well as gaining a new perspective on how God could use them.

In my more than 56 years in journalism I've written a weekly editorial for a denominational paper, feature articles, a children's story column, a boys' Bible study column, curriculum for inner city teens, curriculum for adults and for boys in Christian Service Brigade, plus many articles for the captains of industry.

How have I been able to target my material for such a diverse readership? For one thing, I do not think of them as readerships. I think of one person in that age group, that social strata, and zero in on that person's way of thinking and way of living. That's how I can communicate to readers as diverse as your eight-year-old son and the chairman of the board of the Mitsui Group in Japan.

Tim LaHaye had written 40 non-fiction books before he teamed up as theologian with Jerry Jenkins, the writer. One of those books sold two million copies. Tim told us at the Writing for the Soul Conference that as he wrote he kept a reader with a sixth grade education in his mind's eye.

In 1963 I had the privilege of interviewing Dr. Helmut Thielicke of Germany on what he considered great preaching. After he described his preparation routine, he concluded with the statement, "Then I go into the marketplace to discover how to apply what I have learned."

Tom Peters has made it abundantly clear in *In Search of Excellence* and *Passion for Excellence* that the business leader needs to get close to his customer. As I read it, I was also thinking of pastors, Bible teachers, and writers. We have too much writing and speaking from limited contact.

Now let's consider your book or article idea. Who is the target reader? What does she or he look like, think about, feel? If you are to become his or her mentor through a book or article, what do you need to learn about him or her? And what must you do to keep that reader clearly in focus as you write?

The second reason Luke earned the right to be published is that

## **2. Luke Researched the Market for What Was Available**

Take a quick look at verses one and two of Luke chapter one, "Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us."

What did Luke do before he began to write? He thoroughly checked with what was already circulating about the life of Jesus. That may be a bit disconcerting to some, for Luke seems to be saying that, as he wrote this segment of the Bible, he did some rather considerable research into what was available.

It is generally conceded by Bible scholars that Mark and Matthew were already circulating by the time Luke wrote his gospel. There may also have been other reports of Jesus' activities circulating. What Luke is telling us is that he is well aware of these. If he were alive today, he undoubtedly would have checked his local Christian bookstore thoroughly before he began writing.

I have represented a Christian motivational speaker who consistently addresses the top leaders in the business world. And helping them understand the importance of a vision is part of his message. But, when I tried to market his book on VisionQuest, I drew yawns from publishers—that topic had been well-covered in both the Christian and secular market. And even though as a speaker the author could sell a lot of books, he still had to have a unique angle.

The acquisitions editor who is not aware of what the competition is doing is not true to the calling of God in his life. By the same token, the author who is content to write without market research deserves to receive a stream of rejection letters.

You see, God used Luke's background as a doctor to bring us a unique slice of Jesus' life. Who else gives us the story of Zechariah going dumb? Of Mary going to Elizabeth and magnifying the Lord with that marvelous Magnificat? Of the shepherds on the hills of Bethlehem visited by angels?

Can you imagine Matthew, that Jewish specialist who repeatedly quotes from the Psalms of David, passing up the shepherd's story?

Where but in Luke do you find the troubling, yet heartwarming story of a 12-year-old Jesus left behind by his parents, only to find him confounding the wise men of Israel?

Who includes the three parables about prayer that Jesus told? See Luke 11:5-13; 18:2-5; 18:10-14. And I find it instructive to compare the story of the healing of the centurion's servant in Luke 7:1-10 with that in Matthew 8:5-13. Or look at the extra detail Luke provides compared to Mark when he tells the story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35 vs. Mark 16:12-13).



We go to Luke to find Christ's heartbeat for the poor, to gain insights into medical conditions in Jesus' day, to understand how vital a part women played during Jesus' ministry on earth. You cannot exclude women from serving Jesus in a wide variety of ways if you read Luke carefully and prayerfully.

In 1980, I looked at what was available on the market and realized there was not a single book focusing on inductive Bible study for preteens, so I packaged a collection of *Dash Magazine* Bible study articles I had written and sold them as *Preteen Bible Exploration*. When the Billy Graham people saw the book, they were intrigued, for they did not have a Bible study book for follow-up with children. For years, children around North America received copies of my book once they had completed the initial follow-up materials. It happened because I saw a need in the market.

In 1986, we received a manuscript that had been rejected by Word Books because the author was unknown. We knew Jan Frank was a speaker for CLASS, an organization that promotes Christian women speakers nationwide. We also realized *A Door of Hope*, a book about being sexually molested by her father, and the ten steps she and others had to take to deal with the pain even as adults, was truly unique. There was no other book on incest written by a victim who was also a licensed family counselor and a speaker. She had found a niche market. Twenty-four years later that book is still in print.

### 3. Luke Did His Own Research on the Life of Christ

Luke makes this clear in verse three, when he writes, "It seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus."

The only time period when Luke was in Israel long enough to do this kind of research appears to be the two years that Paul was in prison in Caesarea. Can you, in your imagination, see Dr. Luke trudging the Roman roads in Israel, tracking down witnesses to events in Jesus' life? I'm sure the apostle Paul must have been on his mind a lot, but he kept at his research. If you've ever wondered what good came out of Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea, the Gospel According to Luke is probably a major example.

Research is, unfortunately, not a strong point with most Christian writers. Those who do research really stand out. I think of Dr. Warren Wiersbe, who for years read a sermon each day in addition to his other research. And, when I read the books of Charles Swindoll, I see that a lot of research has gone into his material.

James Michener has been one of the most popular American writers. He spent years of meticulous research for every novel he wrote. He lived in the area he was going to write about for long periods, digging into the history of the region in great depth, and took the time to absorb the environment visually. No wonder he could write 900-page books that sold better than most short books.

Holly Miller, editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*, told me in an interview that most Christian writers do not interview enough people in researching for an article. She recommends five to six interviews for every article. In her case, her article series on women today was quickly recognized by a book editor as unique and she received a book contract for articles she had written.

When I examine the Gospel According to Luke, I sense that he has interviewed scores of people, mulled over the implications of Jesus' life and the vitriolic opposition of the Jewish religious leaders. Thus his research resulted in more than a merely mechanical retelling of events. Rather, through the energizing of the Holy Spirit, his material became the creative and dramatic overview of the greatest life that ever lived.

The kind of knowledge required to write significant Christian literature is felt knowledge, a blend of passion and clear-sighted awareness of reality. When your research results in that kind

of knowledge, then you are not merely a technician, fitting words together to gain X number of dollars in royalty. Nor is it only the expression of a dilettante who likes to play with words and see how they fit together.

Many of the manuscripts I receive are merely a retelling of what the writer has heard over a period of time listening to Christian radio and watching Christian television. They are not really taking that second step of testing those ideas against the experience of the ages, the writing of the sages. Because some recognized leader said it, they accept it.

Research will not only vastly enrich content, it will often help shape content. Outlines may have to be scrapped in the light of new information uncovered by research. The interaction with the big ideas of the ages will be clearly evident as the book or article takes shape.

Research can get us the information and stories we need to write an article or a book, but we need to take a fourth step. And that relates to organizing the material for maximum impact on the reader.

#### **4. Luke Organized His Material for Maximum Impact**

Here's how Luke describes his approach: "to write it out for you in consecutive order..." (v. 3).

Have you ever examined the Gospels from the perspective of organization? Ah, you say, I do not see any special attempt at anything but a chronological sequence of events. Then why did John write, "Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31)?

We may have been so busy relating this passage to John's central message, that we missed the statement about his organizational intent. So consider, for example, how the gospel writers started their books.

How does Matthew start chapter one? With a genealogy. How boring, you may be saying. I can imagine Matthew submitting the manuscript to editor Horatius at Aquila and Priscilla Publishing in Ephesus. Like most editors, he looked at the first page, sighed, and said, "Another addition to the reject pile."

It if had not been for the Jewish press, it probably would never have been published. Yet Matthew knew that the Jewish reader of his day was fascinated by genealogies, so he hooked his reader with the genealogy of Jesus.

The gospel writer Mark was probably greatly influenced in his approach to writing by that activist, the apostle Peter. No genealogy for him. He just loved the story of that preacher of fire and brimstone, John the Baptist. He could really make the crowd cringe—even the Roman soldiers. So for all other activists he started with John the Baptist in the desert, people flocking to him from all over. Mark loves crowds, as did Peter, and he records "all the people of Jerusalem" turning out for this itinerant preacher.

Luke was a medical man, deeply concerned over a barren woman, a future father struck dumb, and the miracle of birth by a virgin. Luke saw the significance of the story of Zechariah, of the appearance of the angel to the virgin, Mary, and the miracle that both births represented. For Theophilus, the Greek, the supernatural was as much a part of his life as philosophy. The supernatural surrounding the birth of Christ and his forerunner, John the Baptist, was *The Evidence that Demands a Verdict* for him in terms of life commitment.

Even today, the Christian writer's task is to give us a precise slice of life that has unity and coherence. It must have internal and external consistency and validity. Only through a unity inherent in the plan and in the selection of materials chosen can any written material give us the fullest satisfaction.

Have you ever heard someone say about an article or a book, “There’s something missing” or “It doesn’t quite hang together?” That happens when the Christian writer has not established the kind of unity that we see in God—and feel in ourselves as persons in His image. For, when a person says that literature must communicate truth, then he means, among other things, that it must convey unity—all the parts must fit together for a perfect whole.

Yet the selection process is to do more than that. It is also designed to give us a slice of life from the proper perspective as a Christian. Failure to do this leads us to all kinds of tangents. We become too experience-oriented, or we fail to recognize the role of experience. We see God as a great judge, and do not experience His love—or vice versa.

In presenting this balanced approach to the Christian life, we must remember that Jesus and the writers of the epistles do not present truth in isolation from life. They did not present truth for truth’s sake—only as it applied in life situations as a corrective, as a motivator to holiness, as the instigator of hope. Thus, some of the greatest teaching in the Bible is in response to a specific life situation, described in sometimes embarrassing detail.

I am convinced that, as communicators, we must go beyond information to imagination, motivation, and action suggestions if we want to change lives. Thus, we must keep all four elements in mind when organizing our material—just as Luke did.

I have come to see the article or book as a movement. The reader is to be moved from Point A on a continuum to Point B in terms of information, motivation, and action, with imaginative presentation of truth as the key to presenting transcendent truth in humanly perceivable forms. And every article or book needs to keep all four elements in mind as the material is outlined and developed.

Finally, I notice Luke was guided by intention.

### **5. Luke Had a Clear Purpose**

As Luke settled into his stool to pick up the stylus, he had a distinct purpose in mind for his book manuscript. Let me read it for you: “So that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught” (Luke 1:4). Luke wanted to provide written assurance for Theophilus for all he had been taught verbally. The material was to recreate again and again the scenes of Jesus’ miraculous ministry, His atoning death, and His validating resurrection.

If you have a clear purpose for writing your article or book, it will infuse everything you put on paper, or into the computer, with a central dynamic that both guides you as a writer and aids in the communication to the reader. If this purpose grows out of your commitment to helping fulfill God’s purpose on this earth, it will carry you through the many moments when you are discouraged. Finally, your book or article will have the desired result in the life of the reader.

One of the most significant books I have been associated with was *Daktar: Diplomat in Bangladesh* by Dr. Viggo Olson. From the beginning, his purpose was not to satisfy Christian curiosity, or to raise money for the Malumghat Christian Memorial Hospital in Bangladesh, but to bring fellow medical professionals to faith in Christ. He perceived his conversion from agnosticism to faith, and the many hair-raising experiences in Bangladesh, as the hook to get the reader into and through the book. His commitment to Jesus Christ, the many answers to prayer, the response of those in Bangladesh, were to be used to win over even the truly skeptical. Even the back cover material was tailored not to offend the non-believer, but to hook his or her interest.

What was the result? Scores of medical men received Christ, many students in medical schools were challenged to enter medical mission work. An atheistic surgeon in Ann Arbor, Michigan, for example, was given a copy of the book just before he went into the hospital for surgery. While recuperating, he read *Daktar: Diplomat in Bangladesh* and accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior.

More and more this purpose must be relevant to the genuinely felt needs of the reader. Today's generation is asking, "Is it real? Is it relevant?" Everything I read tells me that an increasingly highly technical generation is tired of generalities about being a successful Christian.

Several years ago, for example, I was concerned about the jealousy I was seeing between different areas in our company—and different ministries in our church. Using the language of gang warfare, I called them turf battles. I sat down and wrote an article called "Tire Tracks on My Turf." I sent it off to a denominational magazine, which published it. Then a magazine devoted to business development in under-developed countries reprinted it. The editor of Campus Crusade's newsletter for international staff was so impressed with it, he reprinted it, giving it further international outreach. Finally, another denominational publication picked it up as well. I had touched a hot button that made it relevant internationally.

Let me go back to a book I mentioned earlier to illustrate the significance of purpose. Jan Frank had been sexually molested by her father, a Bible class teacher in an evangelical church. When she married, the memory of what her father had done kept surfacing when she tried to relate to her husband. One day she realized she was even repelled by the aftershave he used because it was the same her father had once used. She sought help from Philippian Ministries, a prayer ministry for those suffering emotionally from memories of abuse. Once she got help, she joined the prayer ministry, counseling and praying with other women who had experienced incest.

Jan Frank decided to write a book that would not only incorporate her experience of finding help, but also provide a ten-step approach to inner healing from memories of abuse. We heard about it and examined it, letting a Campus Crusade for Christ counselor read it. He was so impressed, he asked for copies of the manuscript immediately so he could begin support groups using the material.

We released *A Door of Hope* in 1987, and it was an immediate success. What made it a top seller? Jan Frank had a clearly defined purpose, that of helping women who needed to be freed from the chains of emotional bondage so they could serve the Lord with gladness.

What is your purpose for writing? Unless you can write your goal in one sentence and keep it before you as a lighthouse beacon while writing, you may well end up on the shoals of insignificance, or inconsequentiality.

What earns you the right to be published? Five key elements, none less significant than the other: a clearly targeted reader, knowledge of what is on the market, thoroughly researched content, organization for life change, and a clear purpose. Nothing less will do.

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# "Parallelomania" and God's Unique Revelation

AÍDA BESANÇON SPENCER

Julius Africanus in the third century voiced a concern to Aristides. Christian interpreters should not conclude that the evangelists would affirm "what was not truth," as a way to understand differences in the genealogies of Matthew and Mark. Then in effect "a lie" would be "contrived for the praise and glory of Christ." That would make the Christian writers "false witnesses" (1 Cor 15:15). And if the writers of the New Testament would be afraid lest they "should seem a false witness in narrating a marvelous fact, how should not he be justly afraid, who tries to establish the truth by a false statement, preparing an untrue opinion?" (Epistle to Aristides I). Africanus' helpful principle is still relevant today. Those of us who care for God's written revelation need to be careful that our methods of interpretation do not undermine the truth of God's revelation. In other words, our means affect our ends.

In Biblical Studies for many years we have recognized the misuse of the principle of correlation, which is that people's historical life is so related and interdependent, no radical change can take place without affecting a change in all that immediately surrounds it. In this sense, sociological change has been completely identified with chemical reaction. The history of religion school in the early 1900s is well known among evangelicals as a school which misused the principle of correlation by trying to explain Christianity solely on the basis of its environment. In 1961, Society of Biblical Literature president Samuel Sandmel, professor at Hebrew Union College, warned scholars of the danger of "parallelomania," "that extravagance among scholars which first overdoes the supposed similarity in passages and then proceeds to describe source and derivation as if implying literary connection flowing in an inevitable or predetermined direction."<sup>1</sup> Sandmel was concerned to have accurate scholarship. The principle of correlation might encourage a scholar 1) to find parallels between passages that are not really parallel, 2) to assume a direct organic literary connection provided the parallels, and 3) to draw the conclusion that the flow is in a particular direction.<sup>2</sup> He argued that "detailed study is the criterion" for the difference between an abstract versus a specific parallel.<sup>3</sup> "Detailed study ought to respect the context and not be limited to juxtaposing mere excerpts. Two passages may sound the same in splendid isolation from their context, but when seen in context reflect difference rather than similarity."<sup>4</sup> In addition, "it is the distinctive which is significant for identifying the particular, and not the broad areas in common with other Judaisms."<sup>5</sup> In other words, Scripture as a common source will cause commonalities among ancient Jewish writers. These parallels are of no consequence. Chronology is also important.<sup>6</sup> Sandmel adds that we certainly do not want to distort Paul by conforming Paul's context to the content of the alleged parallel. In other words, alleged extrabiblical parallels can distort the meaning of Paul's own writings. Even though a Jewish scholar, Sandmel decided: "I am prepared to believe that Paul represents more than a hodgepodge of sources. I find in his epistles a consistency and a cohesiveness of thought that make me suppose that he had some genuine individuality....I am not prepared to believe that there was a bridge for one-way traffic that stretched directly from the caves on the west bank of the Dead Sea to Galilee, or even further into Tarsus, Ephesus, Galatia, and Mars Hill."<sup>7</sup> Possibility and probability are not predetermined inference.<sup>8</sup> He concludes that

1 Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *Journal of Biblical Literature* LXXXI: 1 (March 1962): 1.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid. See also Jeffery M. Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case," *JBL* 127:2 (Summer 2008): 246-55.

4 Sandmel: 2.

5 Sandmel: 3.

6 Sandmel: 4.

7 Sandmel: 5.

8 Sandmel: 5, 6.



parallels can be “exact,” “some with and some devoid of significance” or imperfect or parallels only out of context.<sup>9</sup> Sandmel’s concern is sound, accurate, objective scholarship. He concludes in 1961 “that we are at a junction when biblical scholarship should recognize parallelomania for the disease that it is.”<sup>10</sup>

J. Gresham Machen in 1925 also had similar concerns. He too was concerned for sound, accurate, objective scholarship because misuse of the principle of correlation affects the question of the origin of Christianity, which is “the question of the truth of Christianity.”<sup>11</sup> The New Testament is “fundamental and authoritative in all ages of the Church.”<sup>12</sup> Its truths are unique and demand an “absolutely exclusive devotion.”<sup>13</sup> In his assessment of the comparative religion school, he concludes that “a parallel does not always mean a relationship of dependence.”<sup>14</sup> Similarity between pagan religions and Christianity is often “enormously exaggerated.”<sup>15</sup> The dates of the so-called sources are not always highlighted.<sup>16</sup> The comparative-religion school does “not like having the flow of their thought checked by so homely a thing as a date.”<sup>17</sup> The history of religion school has the “same lordly disregard of dates” running all through its modern treatment of the New Testament period.<sup>18</sup> In addition, it rarely convincingly shows through what channels did these pagan influences enter Christianity.<sup>19</sup>

Machen does exemplify much knowledge of the first century Jewish and Greco-Roman perspectives. Jewish Christians such as Paul needed to be familiar, too, with Gentile habits of thought and life in order to win them to follow Christ<sup>20</sup> (1 Cor 9:22). For one, such knowledge demonstrates the need and longing of the ancient world for redemption, the preparation for the coming of the gospel, and Christianity as the unique way to satisfy need.<sup>21</sup> Second, Paul may have used vocabulary or terms in the “Greek world-language of the Hellenistic age” that were present also in mystery religions, but not ideas.<sup>22</sup> However, in addition to sound scholarship, Machen shows that syncretistic borrowing is alien to the exclusive claims of Christianity (and Judaism).<sup>23</sup> First Corinthians 1:23 provides crucial proof. How could Christianity be “foolish” to Gentiles if it borrowed all from pagan religions?<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, syncretistic borrowing is alien to the all-sufficiency of the Christian message. Paul’s religion was based on what Jesus had done and had said during his earthly life.<sup>25</sup> The Christian message had been revealed to Paul “directly by the Lord. It was supported by the testimony of those who had been intimate with Jesus; it was supported by the Old Testament Scriptures. But throughout it was the product of revelation.”<sup>26</sup> How can one suppose that the man who wrote “hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” (1 Cor 1:20), would be “willing to modify the divine foolishness of his message in order to make it conform to the religion of his pagan hearers?”<sup>27</sup>

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9 Sandmel, 7.

10 Sandmel: 13.

11 J. Gresham Machen, *The Origin of Paul's Religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1925), 4.

12 Machen, 6.

13 Machen, 9.

14 Machen, 313.

15 Machen, 238.

16 Ibid.

17 Machen, 241.

18 Ibid.

19 Machen, 255.

20 Machen, 9, 225.

21 Machen, 262, 272.

22 Machen, 260.

23 Machen, 238.

24 Machen, 314.

25 Machen, 13.

26 Machen, 261.

27 Ibid.

We can buttress Machen's points about the Bible as revelation by referring to some specific Scriptures that claim that they are the product of revelation. In addition to 1 Corinthians 1, another important principle for Paul is presented in I Thessalonians 2:13, where he states that the message that he, Paul, and Silvanus and Timothy are sharing is truly a word "from God, not a human word" which is "at work" among the ones believing. Repeatedly the Bible claims to be accurate because it is indeed revealed by God.<sup>28</sup> For example,

- a) "The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever" (Isa 40:18). People are as inconstant as the grass or flower, but not God's word.
- b) The Lord tells Jeremiah: "I have put my words in your mouth" (Jer 1:9). As a true prophet, Jeremiah "has stood in the council of the Lord so as to see and to hear his word" (Jer 1:18). The Lord is against the prophets "who use their own tongues and say, 'Says the Lord'" (Jer 23:30).
- c) The Lord also tells Ezekiel: "speak my very words" to Israel (Ezek 3:4). The prophet Ezekiel contrasts with those prophets who prophesy "out of their own imagination," who say "'Says the Lord,' when the Lord has not sent them" and the Lord "did not speak" (Ezek 13:1, 6, 7).
- d) Micaiah as a true prophet speaks God's words not merely those of his fellow prophets (2 Chron 18:13).
- e) And, of course, Jesus says: "God is true. For whom God has sent—speaks God's words" (*hrema*, John 3:33b-34; see also Rev 21:5; 22:6; John 10:35).

A naturalistic explanation of the genesis of Paul's religion will always have difficulties; as Machen concludes his book *The Origin of Paul's Religion*: "The fundamental difficulty in explaining the origin of Paulinism will never disappear by being ignored; it will never yield to compromises of any kind. It will disappear only when Jesus is recognized as being really what Paul presupposes Him to be and what all the Gospels represent Him as being – the eternal Son of God, come to earth for the redemption of man, now seated once more on the throne of His glory, and working in the hearts of His disciples through His Spirit, as only God can work. Such a solution was never so unpopular as it is to-day. Acceptance of it will involve a Copernican revolution in many departments of human thought and life."<sup>29</sup>

To summarize, when it comes to types of literary parallels, we have 3 categories:

- 1.) **abstract or imperfect or alleged or seeming parallel** – passages appear similar, but may be out of context;
- 2.) **specific or applied parallel** – direct organic literary connection provided the parallels, a relationship of dependence shown by word for word similarity and similar content or ideas;
- 3.) **true or exact parallel-source and derivation** – literary connection flowing in a particular direction can be significant or devoid of significance if a result of broad commonalities.

We have 7 ways (at least) to avoid "parallelomania":

1. detailed study of the contexts, not simply juxtaposing excerpts. The content of each piece needs to be studied in light of its own literary context;
2. awareness of what is distinctive from broad commonalities from Scripture;
3. awareness of chronology (especially, ancient sources should first be dated by their earliest manuscripts not their theoretical origin);

<sup>28</sup> See also Gal 1:11-12, 16-17; 1 Cor 2:10 and John Jefferson Davis, *Handbook of Basic Bible Texts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), ch. 1.

<sup>29</sup> Machen, 312.

4. demonstration of channels through which influences happened;
5. awareness of difference of terms or vocabulary versus ideas or content or meaning;
6. consideration of likelihood of borrowing in light of nature of belief system – exclusive vs. inclusive;
7. remembering the strength of the writer – such as historical, theological, apologetical, homiletical before determining any likelihood of borrowing.

Practicing such wise rules in order to avoid parallelomania has always characterized evangelical exegesis. That is, until recently. What was once true of the history of religion school is now being practiced in evangelicalism itself. Recently, some evangelicals have embraced the principle of correlation. Peter Enns has written a thoughtful treatise, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, summarizing some of these current methodologies, proposing not only that the biblical writers addressed their ancient world and used vocabulary or terms of their ancient world (as his predecessor at Westminster Theological Seminary J. Gresham Machen would agree), but also that the Scripture is *best* explained by its ancient environment. As a matter of fact, he argues, we should not expect the Bible to rise above Ancient Near Eastern standards. The New Testament is similar to other Second Temple texts not only in interpretive methods but also in use of legendary traditions. Ancient simple peoples composed stories that were appropriate standards for their own time, although we, from a scientific perspective, would find these stories inaccurate and untrue. Such indisputable evidence should not be ignored or dismissed because of theological presuppositions.<sup>30</sup>

All of us evangelicals would agree that since we have a historical faith, historical context is relevant and important.<sup>31</sup> The question is this, to paraphrase Enns, do we *not* “honor the Lord” *nor* “uphold the gospel by playing make-believe” when theology is more important than so-called evidence?<sup>32</sup> Rather, is it not true that theology or presuppositions drive the way so-called evidence is perceived or used? Of course, all historiography has a perspective,<sup>33</sup> but that does not make such a perspective automatically false. The question to answer is, which perspective is accurate? Is harmony really a “distortion of the highest order,”<sup>34</sup> or is it an application of the truth that God is true? Enns suggests that Christ’s incarnation is analogous to Scripture’s “incarnation.”<sup>35</sup> For God to reveal himself means that he accommodates himself.<sup>36</sup> But, if Jesus can become incarnate without sin (2 Cor 5:21), can not God’s revelation become incarnate without falsehood?

Once we accept the premise that apostolic hermeneutics is “*best* explained by bearing in mind the Second Temple world in which they thought and wrote,”<sup>37</sup> we may end up no longer being “accurate” scholars and, I believe, having that childlike trust in a revelation from God which is accurate too. I would like to present several examples in which recent evangelical scholars have not avoided “parallelomania” because they adopted the presupposition that the writers of Scripture can not rise above their own ancient environment.

In 1 Corinthians 10:4 Paul writes that the Israelites “all drank the same spiritual drink; for they were drinking from a spiritual accompanying rock, and the rock was Christ.” Liberal and some recent evangelical commentators mention that “other Second Temple texts refer to a mobile source

30 Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 40-41, 45, 52, 152, 155, 171. For a similar view, see Iain Provan, “How Can I Understand, Unless Someone Explains It to Me?” (Acts 8:30-31): Evangelicals and Biblical Hermeneutics, *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 17:1 (2007): 16-20. The Westminster Theological Seminary’s board expressed concern over Enns’s book. Sarah Pulliam, “Westminster Theological Suspension,” *Christianity Today* 52:6 (June 2008): 17-18.

31 Enns, 48.

32 Enns, 52, 171-2.

33 Enns, 66.

34 Enns, 65.

35 Enns, 18.

36 Enns, 107.

37 Enns, 155.

of water accompanying the Israelites through the desert.”<sup>38</sup> They “all have in common” the “notion of mobility.” Because Paul in a “brief, offhand” way comments “about a moveable rock speaks to the existence, in some form, of a ‘moveable well’ tradition already in Paul’s day.” Even though the other Second Temple texts “are later than Paul” they “are too elaborate to have been caused by Paul’s incidental comment.” Early interpreters “may have equated” Exodus 17 and Numbers 20: “Both Paul and the other texts are witnesses to an interpretive tradition that preceded both of them.” Paul Christianizes this Old Testament story. Therefore, by this reasoning, Paul “beyond a reasonable doubt” has used not just the Old Testament, but the interpretive tradition of his time.<sup>39</sup>

By beginning with the premise that apostolic hermeneutics is “best explained” by the Second Temple world in which the apostles thought and wrote they have ended up positing:

- a) Paul may have equated Exodus 17 and Numbers 20, thereby creating an error, from a scientific perspective;
- b) Paul borrowed from a tradition for which we have no clear basis;
- c) Paul used human words, not God’s revelation.

However, if we begin from the bases that

- a) we must first understand a text in its own literary context before we search for any possible sources;
- b) the Old Testament and/or God’s direct revelation are more likely sources than other Second Temple references for the content of the Bible;
- c) we assume a text is consistent and accurate unless proved otherwise (and certainly a text which claims to be God’s written revelation);

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38 Enns, 150-1.

39 Peter Enns (150-1) agrees with higher critic Hans Conzelmann that “Paul sets out from a Jewish haggadic tradition” in which “the rock becomes peripatetic.” *1 Corinthians*, Hermeneia, trans. James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 166-7;

David E. Garland also says: Paul may have “incorporated a traditional Jewish interpretation of the following rock, but he gives it a uniquely Christian twist.” *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 456. Even though Gordon Fee notes that Paul refers to the “rock,” while the rabbinic traditions referred to the “well” in Num 21, he concludes that “Paul seems to be referring to a common tradition of the continual supply of water.” *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 448; Anthony C. Thiselton writes that “it is clearly and widely recognized that *Paul informs his own Christology by drawing explicitly on traditions of preexistent Wisdom from the OT Wisdom literature ...and hellenistic Judaism of the first century.*” *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 728;

Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer conclude: “That the wording of [1 Cor 10:4] has been influenced by the Jewish legend about a rock following the Israelites in their wanderings and supplying them with water, is hardly doubtful; but that the Apostle believed the legend is very doubtful....St Paul seems to take up this Rabbinic fancy and give it a spiritual meaning.” *The First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1911), 201; C.K. Barrett is more nuanced when he writes that the “references to the well of water in Num xx.ii; xxi.16 seem to have led to the belief (within Judaism) that the well (provided by the rock) accompanied Israel on their journeys.” “By adapting these identifications Paul interprets Christ in terms of the wisdom of Hellenistic Judaism.” *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, BNTC (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1968), 222-3; Simon Kistemaker assumes that “Paul was acquainted with” the legendary Rabbinic “material on the rock that supplied water for the Israelites and traveled with them during their forty-year journey,” but he, “is interested, however, not in a legend but in God’s miraculous provision of food and drink.” *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 324; Alan F. Johnson concludes that “Paul was not alluding to” the “rabbinic traditions that mention a movable, rock-shaped well that rolled along with the Israelites in their journeying” because the rabbinic traditions “speak of an accompanying stream of water, not the rock itself” and possibly “Paul understood the rock to be the source of both the Israelites’ food and drink.” *1 Corinthians*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), 157; Charles Hodge concurs that “According to the local tradition, as old at least as the Koran, the rock smitten by Moses was not part of the mountain, but a detached rock,... This view of the passage makes the apostle responsible for a Jewish fable, and is inconsistent with his divine authority.” *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), 174.

d) yet keep in mind that God's truth may not only be found in the Bible but could also be found in other ancient texts, what do we learn?

1. We can all agree that 1 Corinthians 10:4 is a difficult text to understand. How can you drink from a rock? How can a rock accompany you? How can a rock be God? However, if we believe our God created our incredibly complex universe, certainly God is capable of communicating a subtle message in God's written revelation. Many commentators agree on the central point of 1 Corinthians 9:24-10:31: "Stand firm in the face of temptation."<sup>40</sup> Food and drink are recurring topics in chapters 9 and 10: the apostles have the right to receive food and drink, Christ provided food and drink to the Israelites, the Israelites ate food and drink in their idolatry, the food and drink of communion is communion with Christ, and believers should not drink and eat food offered to idols, unless they are not told about its previous use. In summary, Paul ends, "whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, everything do to God's glory" (1 Cor 10:31). By doing acts to God's glory we can correctly use food and drink.

2. The Old Testament has several potential sources for Paul's basic reference. The Old Testament refers to several similar incidents:

A. In Exodus 17:1-7, having left the wilderness of Sin, the Hebrews were in Rephidim. They had manna to eat (16:35), but no water. God tells Moses to take his rod (and the elders in the Masoretic text) and God says (according to the Septuagint): "Behold I myself have stood (perfect tense) there before you upon the rock (*petra*) in Choreb, and having smitten the rock, then water will come out of it and the people will drink" (LXX).

The Hebrew reads: "Behold I am standing (participle) before your face, there upon the rock (*sur*) in Horeb, and you shall smite the rock and there will go out from it water and the people may drink" (17:6a).

B. According to Numbers 20:1-11 in the wilderness of Zin in Kadesh, the Hebrews again had no water. God tells Moses again to take his rod and Aaron this time and "speak to the rock before them and it will give its water and you will bring to them water from the rock and give drink to the congregation and their cattle." Moses, this time, claims Moses and Aaron themselves must bring them water, and, instead of speaking to the rock, strikes the rock two times with his rod "and much water came out and the congregation drank and their cattle" (LXX).

C. Numbers 21:16 describes the Israelites coming to a well in Arnon near Moab of which the Lord said to Moses: "Gather the people and I will give them water to drink." Israel sang at the well. Then the Israelites traveled from place to place, ending in "the valley in Moab" (vv.17-19). A rock is mentioned (*lazeuo*- "top of what was hewn in stone," v.19 LXX).

The Second Temple texts seem to refer to the Numbers 21:16 event. *Pseudo-Philo's Biblical Antiquities*, which is hypothetically written in the first century A.D., though its oldest manuscript is from the eleventh century, refers to a "well of water" the Lord "brought forth" "to follow them." It "followed them in the wilderness 40 years and went up to the mountain with them and went down into the plains" (10:7; 11:15). It speaks of a well. Then, instead of the *Israelites* traveling from place to place, the *well* travels from place to place.

*Targum Onqelos to Numbers* 21:16-19, which is tentatively dated to the third century A.D., also refers to Numbers 21:16. It speaks of a well given to the Hebrews, "which the princes dug" which "went down with them to the valleys, and from the valleys it went up with them to the high country."

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40 Enns, 149.



*The Tosefta* (dated probably also third century) seems the most elaborate of these references. It refers to Numbers 21 but also refers to a “rock” that would rise up onto the mountains and go down into the valleys (Sukkah 3:11). In the second century Rabbi Jose ben Judah added that the Well was conferred upon Israel for the “merit of Miriam,” one of the three good leaders or shepherds of Israel (in addition to Moses and Aaron, b. Ta’anith 9a).

Paul, in contrast, does not appear to refer to Numbers 21 at all, but to Exodus 17 and Numbers 20, but especially to Psalm 78 which summarizes both events. In Psalm 78:15-16, God “split rocks open in the wilderness and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep. He made streams come out of the rock, and caused waters to flow down like rivers” (Ps 78:15-16 NRSV). Psalm 78 has a similar main point to the one that Paul has: the Hebrews did not believe God’s miracles. Paul tells the Corinthians also not to put Christ to the test: Watch out lest you fall (1 Cor 10:9, 12; Ps 78:32, 42).

Both texts refer to the ancestors’ example (Ps 78:48; 1 Cor 10:1), the cloud and the sea (Ps 78:13, 14, 23; 1 Cor 10:2), eating food (Ps 78:24-25, 29; 1 Cor 10:3), drinking (Ps 78:15; 1 Cor 10:4), a rock (Ps 78:15, 16, 20; 1 Cor 10:4), the people who desired evil (Ps 78:29-30; 1 Cor 10:6).

However, God appears to have Paul use as his central hermeneutic Exodus 17:5: “Behold I am standing there...upon the rock” as the basis for “the rock was Christ” (1 Cor 10:4). God is clearly identified as accompanying the Israelites by the use of the participle, and God is identified with the rock. This is a statement for the pre-existence and divinity of Christ. Christ, the rock, accompanied the Hebrews.

In other words, 1 Corinthians 10:1-12 has a number of similarities to Psalm 78 (I found 7), whereas it has many less similarities to the other Second Temple texts. In addition, chronologically Psalm 78 would precede 1 Corinthians 10, whereas the other Second Temple texts would follow 1 Cor 10.<sup>41</sup> Why could not Paul have used the Old Testament, inspired by the Holy Spirit, as his basis? The contexts of 1 Corinthians 10 and Psalm 78 are similar. Why then posit a theoretical tradition as Paul’s basis? In that case have we not allowed revelation to become subservient to accommodation? Evangelism must be incarnational, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (“to all I have become all (things), in order that by all means I will (might) save some,” v.22b). Scripture, to be true to the Bible’s claims for itself, must be “resurrectional,” as the Apostle Peter explains: “for not by human will was prophecy ever borne (guided, *phero*), but rather by the Holy Spirit, being borne (guided), humans spoke from God” (2 Pet 1:21). God is the source. God used humans, but as Paul elaborates: “All Scripture is Godbreathed (*theopneustos*)” (2 Tim 3:16). God “breathes hard” and brings life to human words. Resurrection is a more primary image for Scripture than incarnation.

To summarize, we need to be wary of naturalistic explanations of the *content* of God’s revelation because that would make the biblical writers false witnesses and undermine the Bible’s unique, authoritative, exclusive, historical claims to be God’s revelation.

Other difficult texts to understand are Jude 9 and 14. Some scholars claim that the “extracanonical origin” of Jude reporting that the archangel Michael disputed with the devil about Moses’ body (Jude 9) is “beyond debate.”<sup>42</sup> Early interpreters “invented” a story to explain Deuteronomy 34:6, “To this day no one knows where [Moses’] grave is.”<sup>43</sup> Clement of Alexandria and Didymus attributed the source to the *Assumption of Moses* whereas Origen attributed it to the *Ascension of Moses*.<sup>44</sup> These may be two different manuscripts. However, the sole extant copy

41 Enns mentions that some scholars conclude that Paul’s statement cannot be connected in any meaningful way with these later texts since Paul could not have copied from the Tosefta and Targum texts written generations, even centuries, after Paul lived, 150.

42 Enns, 145.

43 Ibid.

44 Richard J. Bauckham, *WBC 50: Jude, 2 Peter* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983), 73.

of the *Testament of Moses* dates from the sixth century A.D. The *Testament* is theoretically dated in the first century, later or contemporaneous with Jude. Nowhere does it include a reference to Michael disputing with the devil. James Charlesworth, although a more “liberal” scholar, cautiously concludes that the episode may be contained in the lost ending of the *Testament* but “our present information does not warrant any positive conclusion.”<sup>45</sup> Moreover, he adds, “the contexts” of the *Testament* and Jude “are quite different.”<sup>46</sup> The *Testament* is written as a dialogue between Moses and Joshua, whereas Jude is a letter written to a specific group of believers. Roman Catholic scholar Daniel Harrington also concludes that “we cannot be certain whether [*The Testament of Moses*] contained the account of Moses’ death and burial.”<sup>47</sup> Earl J. Richard says “one can only speculate about the exact source and its wording.”<sup>47</sup> How, then, can we evangelicals conclude without doubt that the source is “beyond debate” and its account is “invented”!

Jude appears to cite the noncanonical 1 Enoch 1:9 when he writes: “Enoch, seventh from Adam, prophesied also to these, saying, ‘Behold the Lord came (*elthen*) with his myriad holy angels<sup>48</sup> to do justice against all and to convict every living being concerning all their ungodly deeds which they committed and concerning all the harsh things which ungodly sinners spoke against him’” (vv.14-15). Jude 14-15 is a close paraphrase of 1 Enoch 1:9, but 1 Enoch is primarily known from a 15th century manuscript. However, among the Dead Sea Scrolls were found fragments of this verse, including the phrase: “myriads of holy ones...deeds” (4Q201.II). The basic idea of the Lord returning with his holy ones to judge and convict the ungodly can be found also in:

- a) Deuteronomy 33:2: “The Lord...came with myriads of holy ones”;
- b) Daniel 7:9-10: “Thousands upon thousands attended,” “the Ancient of Days” and “the books were opened”;
- c) Zechariah 14:5: “Then the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him”;
- d) Matthew 25:31: “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne”;
- e) and 1 Thessalonians 3:13: “When our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.”

Both 1 Chronicles 1:1-3 and Luke 3:37-38 cite Enoch as the “seventh from Adam.” We do not need 1 Enoch 60:8 for that data. Thus, the content of Jude 14-15 could have come from any combination of these biblical verses. The question is, why did Jude give credit to the Enoch of Genesis 5:18-24? Certainly, Enoch’s time had “ungodly sinners,” similar to Jude’s time. By Genesis 6:5-6 the Lord is grieved at humanity’s wickedness because the human heart was evil. Was Jude indeed citing some earlier version of 1 Enoch or did he get a special revelation from God the Father or God the Son, Jude’s own human brother? We do not know.

We might respond that the Bible quotes a variety of noncanonical sources<sup>49</sup> when that source says something true because all truth is God’s truth (as John 1:9 relates, the true Light—Jesus—enlightens every human). But Enns counters that “the real issue is not that we have a canonical author citing a noncanonical text authoritatively.”<sup>50</sup> The real issue is that early interpreters

45 James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha I* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 924.

46 Daniel J. Harrington, *Jude and 2 Peter*, SP 15 (Collegeville, MN.: Liturgical Press, 2003), 209.

47 Earl J. Richard, *Reading 1 Peter, Jude, and 2 Peter: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 272. John Calvin suggests that the Jews handed down “some historical facts not committed to writing.” *Calvin’s Commentaries: Ephesians-Jude* (Wilmington: Associated Publishers, n.d.), 2621. See also p. 2622 on Jude 14.

48 “Myriad holy angels” has slightly better support than “myriad holy ones”: p72, the earliest Greek manuscript for Jude (3-4th century), Alexandrian text type, plus codex Sinaiticus (4th century Alexandrian), and *psi* (9-10th century Byzantine) as opposed to B, codex Vaticanus (4th century Alexandrian) plus A (5th century Byzantine) and C (5th century mixed Alexandrian and Byzantine).

49 E.g. Acts 17:28 (Stoic Aratus, *Phainomena* 5, said “for of him also we are family”); Tit 1:12 (Epimenides, *de Oraculis*); Num 21:14 *Book of the Wars of the Lord*.

50 Enns, 146.

developed traditions that filled in the “gaps” of an “attractive biblical figure,” such as Enoch.<sup>51</sup> In other words, because we can find apocryphal writings that did fill in the gaps of either attractive biblical figures or of mysterious biblical statements,<sup>52</sup> therefore, the authors of the Bible *must* have done the same. But, if they did do the same—invented stories for the curious, would not they and would not we find these invented stories to be less than fully authoritative? Where do we draw the line? What parts of the Bible are accurate and true and authoritative for us today and which parts are *not* accurate and true and authoritative today? Thomas D. Lea in his essay on “Pseudonymity and the New Testament” has for me carefully shown that pseudonymity was not valued by the New Testament and early Christians.<sup>53</sup> As Paul warns, in 2 Thessalonians 2:2, do not be deceived by letters that purport to come from Paul, Silvanus, or Timothy. Look for the sign of authenticity, the personal handwritten greeting (3:17). When Eusebius summarized the arguments for the canon, he classified among the “disputed books” a) those which were “true, genuine, and recognized” from b) those which were not canonical but familiar from c) those which were pseudonymous, to which no “churchman of any generation” ever saw fit to refer (Eusebius, *History* III. 25).

Ancients valued truth and accuracy. Lucian, who lived in the second century A.D., declared “The historian’s sole task is to tell the tale as it happened” (*How to Write History* 39). He cites Thucydides from the fifth century B.C., who said: “he is writing a prize-essay for the occasion, that he does not welcome fiction (*muthodes*) but is leaving to posterity the true account of what happened” (*How to Write History* 42). Colin J. Hemer cites Polybius who “explodes with indignation against” Timaeus who “actually invents speeches.” Timaeus thereby “destroys the peculiar virtue of history.” Polybius “concedes that it is the part of politicians to say what the occasion demands, but it is not for historians to display their creative abilities.”<sup>54</sup> Lucian makes a similar point by describing historians as sculptors: “they certainly never manufactured their own gold or silver or ivory or their other material;...they confined themselves to fashioning it, sawing the ivory, polishing, glueing, aligning it, setting it off with the gold, and their art lay in handling their material properly” (*How to Write History* 50).

Jewish historians had a similar ideal, “historical veracity” (*Against Apion* I.5 [26]). About the Scriptures, Josephus said Jews regard them as the “decrees of God,” which, even if ancient, “noone has ventured either to add, or to remove, or to alter a syllable” (*Against Apion* I.8 [42]). Philo refers to Exodus 23:1a, “You shall not spread a false report,” as the basis for careful and accurate study of the facts (*The Confusion of Tongues* XXVII [140]).

My point is *not* that all ancients were inerrant historians, but rather that the contemporary standards of scientific historiography (fact, impartiality, objectivity, accuracy) were also positive standards in ancient times.

My goal in this essay was to remind us of the importance of using methods of interpretation that support, not undermine, the truth of God’s exclusive and unique revelation. A false basis does not result in truth. Parallelomania can undermine the uniqueness of God’s revelation. The Bible can not be explained solely on the basis of its environment, as if the Bible’s revelation were made of massive sponges drawing in the liquid surpluses of their ancient environments. Although in Christianity God’s revelation enters historical environments and God’s truth is revealed to individual people, God’s revelation remains true, without falsehood, despite its use of human vessels.

The Bible spoke to its generation and used sound methodologies that also communicated to its generation. All truth is God’s truth. But revelation should be seen as primary, rather than

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Enns, 145.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas D. Lea, “Pseudonymity and the New Testament,” *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation*, David Alan Black and David S. Dockery, eds. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 535-9.

<sup>54</sup> Colin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1989), 75.

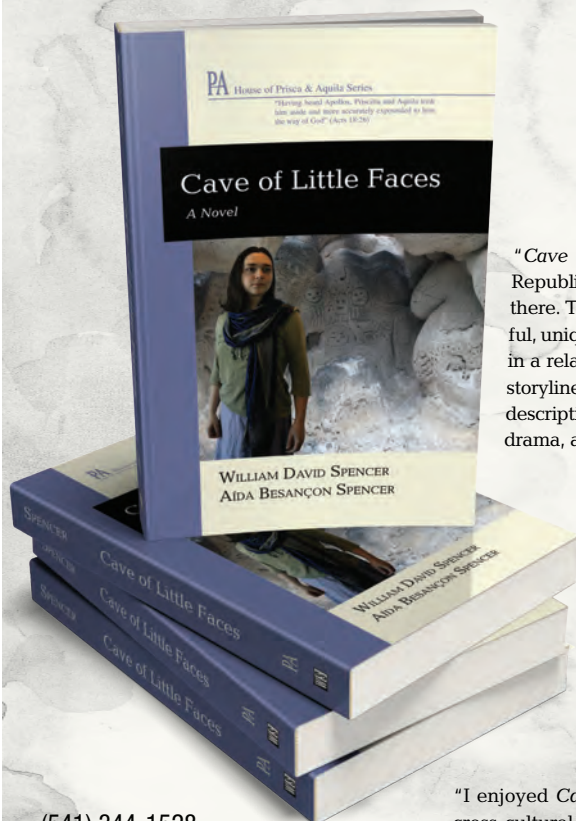
accommodating, when one is seeking to understand the Scriptures. The content and ideas of the biblical writers are unique and/or true. God is capable of communicating truth and complexity to humans. If God is true and the source of all truth, then all of God's Word should be true, historically and literarily consistent, accurate, authentic, and reliable. Not only is the origin and truth of Christianity important to uphold but also carefulness and accuracy of scholarship. That is why we need continually to evaluate our exegetical methods to make sure we have not undermined the truth of God's written revelation and in this way we will humbly do our exegesis, as we do all our other acts, "to God's glory" (1 Cor 10:3).

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# Cave of Little Faces

*A Novel*

WILLIAM DAVID SPENCER  
AÍDA BESANÇON SPENCER



"*Cave of Little Faces* whisks the reader into adventure in the Dominican Republic. The Spencers truly are masters of storytelling. It feels like you are there. This story could easily be made into a movie. The characters are delightful, unique, and so real. The dynamics of Jo's family come across in full color and in a relatable manner, and even the scammers are memorable characters. The storyline is captivating, to say the least. I could not put this book down. The vivid descriptions carried me away to another world—one filled with beauty, intrigue, drama, and a few good laughs as well. Bravo!"

—JENNIFER CREAMER  
School of Biblical Studies, Youth With a Mission

"From their intriguing title, through a roster of memorable characters, to a string of concluding surprises that crackle like fireworks, the Spencers take us on a spiritual roller coaster ride graced with suspense, humor, and dilemmas of high moral complexity. As their heroine, Josefina, finds her way through the forests and mountains of Hispaniola, we realize that hers is a metaphor for the journey we all share—the pilgrimage of life."

—ROBERT BOENIG  
author of the award-winning *C. S. Lewis and the Middle Ages*

"I enjoyed *Cave of Little Faces*! The storyline and the conflicts are great and the cross-cultural setting is one of the book's big strengths. . . . I loved the theology and history the authors brought into the book, managing to make arguments about Christianity's place in history come off as natural and not advertisements for the faith—a rare feat indeed! I also love the way they did the character descriptions. Thank you so much for sharing this wonderful gift with me."

—JASMINE MYERS  
founder and director of the award-winning Still Small Theatre Troupe

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# The Christian Faith, Race Relations, and Civic Order: The Ferguson Protests<sup>1</sup>

MARK HARDEN, DENNIS HOLLINGER, AND EMMETT PRICE

## *Introduction by Dr. Richard Lints:*

The deans and presidents of the historically African-American schools in the ATS, the American Theological Society, including our very own Dean Mark Harden put together a statement related to the events in Ferguson<sup>2</sup> as well as in Staten Island<sup>3</sup> at their annual meeting. A part of it serves as a nice prelude to our conversation here:

“From a manger in Bethlehem, a Bantustan in Soweto, a bus in Montgomery, a freedom summer in Mississippi, a bridge in Selma, a street in Ferguson, a doorway and shots fired in Detroit, a moral Monday in Raleigh, an assault in an elevator in Atlantic City, an office building in Colorado Springs, a market in Paris, a wall in Palestine, the kidnapping and assault of young school-aged girls and the reported killing of 2,000 women, children, and men in Nigeria, God sends a sign, a *kairos* moment, a reminder that the racial climate and the respect for our common humanity everywhere is in decline. How can we continue with business as usual in our theological schools in the midst of so many egregious injustices?” The statement goes on, “We believe that the citizens of good conscience must arise and call our nations to assess and address the rising tides of injustice throughout our legal and criminal justice systems. There must be restraint to those who shoot, kill, and maim in the streets of our nation. And so we call on our churches to challenge their members and communities to live out an inclusive commitment to love God, to love the self, to love the neighbor, and especially to love the enemy across any and all boundaries that would dehumanize, alienate, and separate. We call on all Americans of good conscious who gather across the country to speak out for liberty and justice for all, always. As our modern day prophet Martin Luther King Jr. noted, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”<sup>4</sup>

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1 This article is an adapted Dean’s Forum at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA presented February 10, 2015. See also [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1vy0\\_Q\\_im4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1vy0_Q_im4), “the Ferguson Protests.”

2 Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, was shot and killed on Aug. 9, 2014 by Darren Wilson, a white police officer, in Ferguson, Mo., a suburb of St. Louis. The shooting prompted protests that roiled the area for weeks. On Nov. 24, the St. Louis County prosecutor announced that a grand jury decided not to indict Mr. Wilson. The announcement set off another wave of protests. See [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/08/13/us/ferguson-missouri-town-under-siege-after-police-shooting.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/08/13/us/ferguson-missouri-town-under-siege-after-police-shooting.html?_r=0) accessed 11 April 2015.

3 On July 17, 2014, Eric Garner died in Staten Island, New York City, after a police officer put him in a chokehold for 15 seconds. New York Police Department officers approached Garner on suspicion of selling “loosies” (single cigarettes) from packs without tax stamps. After Garner told the police that he was tired of being harassed and that he was not selling cigarettes, the officers went to arrest Garner. When Officer Daniel Pantaleo took Garner’s wrist behind his back, Garner swatted his arms away. Pantaleo then put his arm around Garner’s neck and pulled him backwards and down onto the ground. After Pantaleo removed his arm from Garner’s neck, he pushed Garner’s face into the ground while four officers moved to restrain Garner, who repeated “I can’t breathe” eleven times while lying face down on the sidewalk. After Garner lost consciousness, officers turned him onto his side to ease his breathing. Garner remained lying on the sidewalk for seven minutes while the officers waited for an ambulance to arrive. The officers and EMTs did not perform CPR on Garner at the scene; according to a spokesman for the PBA, this was because they believed that Garner was breathing and that it would be improper to perform CPR on someone who was still breathing. He was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital approximately one hour later. The medical examiner ruled Garner’s death a homicide. On December 3, 2014, a grand jury decided not to indict Pantaleo. The event stirred public protests and rallies with charges of police brutality. As of December 28, 2014, at least 50 demonstrations had been held nationwide specifically for Garner while hundreds of demonstrations against general police brutality counted Garner as a focal point. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death\\_of\\_Eric\\_Garner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_of_Eric_Garner) accessed 11 April 2015.

4 Martin Luther King, Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom* (Boston: Beacon, 1958) cited in “An Open Letter to Presidents and Deans of Theological Schools in the United States” published on [Huffingtonpost.com](http://Huffingtonpost.com) on 17 January 2015.



In part, not simply as a response to that open letter, we do want to enter the conversation to think out loud about the nature of justice and injustice in a world like ours and to speak about it in light of the vocations, for which many of you are here to prepare: to speak into the public square with the values and the virtues of reconciliation that emerge out of the gospel. So let me just say a very brief word about who's going to be on our panel this morning. Our very own dean of our Boston campus, Dr. Mark Harden, is going to lead off our comments, Professor of Community Development and Outreach. As well as the dean of the Boston Campus, long time Dean of Intercultural Relations at Bethel Seminary before coming here to Gordon-Conwell. Ordained as a Baptist pastor as well, he is uniquely qualified to speak into this set of issues. Also, he was on the police force in Detroit, Michigan for ten years before entering into ministry. Beside Mark, our President Dr. Dennis Hollinger, Professor of Christian Ethics, speaks into questions of our civil order and disorder. Dennis is a board member also of the National Association of Evangelicals, a group that has wrestled with questions of justice and injustice as well. We know by now that it is imperative that we think about how the gospel affects the head, and the heart and the hands, as Dr. Hollinger has written. Finally, but truly not least, new to our campus is Dr. Emmett Price. Now, I can call him one of our own since he is an adjunct professor here at Gordon-Conwell, teaching a course for us this semester on the theology and practice of worship. When he's not here for us, he's actually an Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology and Music Industry at Northeastern University, having also chaired the African-American studies department at Northeastern. Since Emmett is a scholar of hip hop, of jazz, of spirituals, of world music, I think there are few things of merit of which he is not a scholar. A longtime pastor, he is also an alumnus of Gordon-Conwell. So, it is a great honor and privilege to have all three of these individuals. I'm going to turn the mike over to Dr. Harden first and, then, without introduction, over to Dr. Hollinger, and, then, Dr. Price.

***Dr. Harden:***

Thank you Dr. Lints and I especially thank you Dr. Lints for making this happen. This is a timely and a very important issue that I've dealt with my entire life, especially in my professional life. I have basically broken up what I want to say into three parts: I want to talk about the African-American context, the police training and the reality of being a police officer, and, then, my experience as a researcher and teacher in the area of intercultural relations and what I've learned that I think is fitting for helping us to deal with the challenge of racial reconciliation in particular, but not only racial reconciliation, but any reconciliation around any of the "isms," sexism, and ageism, and so forth that we have to deal with as individuals in our lives. But, what I want to put into "context," when I say an African-American context, is really my personal observation, a part of my story, but not just my story, but your story as well. As I look around the room - and this is frightening - 99 percent of you seem to be younger than I am. So this is indeed a historical moment. But I also want to apologize for I came here by way of Minnesota and I did not intend to bring Minnesota with me, but it seems as though we're back in Minnesota just these last few weeks.

But what do I mean by "our story"? We have gotten to this black and white language and a few of us in this room know that it hasn't always been black and white language. In the past, it was many languages. Our country has an overarching story that draws us all into its history. There was a time where Italians were lynched in every single state in this country along with African slaves and African-Americans after slavery and the Jews and the Irish were also persecuted and so forth. And so this sort of ethno-centric behavior has really given us a dark side of our history in this country. And it doesn't just happen between neighbor and neighbor. It happens between systems. It's corrupted many of our systems, our health systems, our economic systems, our political systems, our court and justice systems, and so forth, and even our family systems. When I was a kid, they would just say you were a black person, even if you had white parents or you were biracial, you didn't have a choice in the matter. Today, people have a choice to say what they have. But the courts for over 100 years have made decisions based on white power. Not just going back

in the reconstruction era, but even in recent years, the early part of the twentieth century, White power had to remain. And I understand by teaching for ten years on racial relations in ministry and seminary that a lot of my “white brothers and sisters” often would resist the whole notion of “privilege.” But privilege was a legal matter in many ways and it was argued and adjudicated. And there was Jim Crow that was instituted that we weren’t able to conquer and get rid of. Jim Crow in a legal sense continued until the 1960s.

But if you think about that context, you realize this context is important. Before World War II ethnicity was a huge deal, but, going around the world, our G.I.s were exposed to cultures around the world and then they came back. So, in the 1950s, in the United States we tried to make everything better by saying that we’re all one. This is where the phrase “melting pot” comes in, that America is diverse and is a “melting pot.” But there was still the status quo so everybody wasn’t included in the melting pot. So, then, you were no longer Irish, or Polish-American or Italian-American, you were just “White.” So this notion of “white” has in recent decades come to sear into our brain and our mind. And then in reaction to whiteness and the civil rights movements, there was “blackness” that produced “Black power.” That’s when I grew up. I grew up in the context where we were no longer going to be labeled “negroes,” but we were going to call ourselves “Black” in opposition to White power, by which we were being left out. And that was the reality. And so the civil rights victories happened and out of that we eventually were called “African-Americans.” I still talk to people today who don’t really understand the term “African-Americans.” So a part of our story is understanding. One philosopher, Bill Jones, says, “We jump from segregation into integration without understanding differences.”<sup>5</sup> And that was our problem.

And I would go further than that: it’s not just understanding the differences within humanity, but also understanding the oneness of humanity that’s critical. And a lot of us Christians who preach that and prophesy and so forth and try to live that, we fail miserably because we are capable and wired in such a way, that ethnocentric way, that we respond to differences. And, even though we believe in Jesus in our hearts, we still have prejudices that we harbor against people simply because of differences. And, so, “African-American” to me is an ethnic term in this specific culture. Yes, I’m black, but that’s a racial term and that’s because of the history of our country. As opposed to African-American, I’m black in a racial sense, but I’m African-American, different than Jamaican-American, different from Caribbean-American, and even Cuban-American, where I have Afro brothers and Puerto Rican-Americans, where I have Afro brothers. We all share blackness, but we don’t all share ethnicity and culture necessarily. But, once you build up in your mind or make up your mind even unconsciously that people of a certain racial category have certain behaviors and differences about them that you reify,<sup>6</sup> as we say as social scientists, and we set them apart from ourselves as though we’re not connected to them and as though they are so different, we make them inferior by comparison to ourselves, ourselves whom we know and them whom we don’t know. They become “other.” And that is the story that we’re living with and trying to work out.

Now, I was trained as a police officer. For six months, police officers go through training of four and a half to six months, depending on what department and what level of government you’re in. But after all of that training, for the street police officer, you walk away with three things you don’t forget that they drill into you. One is that, when you use your firearm, you’re using deadly force, even when you just pull it out. You have the potential to use deadly force. There is no wounding the person or in between. It’s very black and white. So they drill that when you pull your firearm out, and you make up in your mind to use that firearm, you shoot to kill, you don’t shoot to wound. That’s the training that you walk away with. But the police officer, the common

5 Shared in a lecture from the readings by Dr. John McKinney of Systematic Theology at Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology in January 2015 at the ATS Conference for African American Chief Academic Officers in Winston Salem, NC.

6 “Reify” refers to the common practice of treating people as “objects” so that they can be examined “objectively” apart from the bias of the inquirer.

police officer, knows three laws, three court decisions. They know many, but three are on their mind. One is *Tennessee vs. Garner*, where in 1985 the Supreme Court ruled that you cannot shoot a fleeing felon at all, ever. Unless the person has a hand grenade and he's about to throw it into a crowd, then you've got a little decision where you can justify it. But if the person is unarmed, you cannot shoot a fleeing felon even if you know that they just robbed a bank with something like a blunt knife. You can't shoot them. Every officer knows that. The second thing you learn is *Miranda*: that you read them their rights. They have the right to due process, that they cannot be convicted and executed in the street. Every officer knows that. Thirdly, you learn *Terry vs. Ohio*. I still remember these things being removed from law enforcement. And *Terry* is the pat-down fist. You pat somebody down and the courts said that the only right you have to pat somebody down to see what's under their garment is when you suspect that your life is in danger. You can't just, because you're a police officer, search someone and violate their constitutional rights. Those are three things that every officer knows.

So I have mixed feelings when I watch all of what's happening on the news in regards to all of these cases. And I do view these cases as very different. And I do reflect on the many times I've been shot at and the many times I've had to make a decision whether to shoot, I reflect on that. I know what it's like to let your guard down and discover that an assailant that you just apprehended had a gun. And that body language you noticed was him or her looking for an opportunity to take you out. I know what that's like first-hand. I know what it's like to be in that great moment. Now, when I graduated from the police academy, they said, "You can't shoot anybody. When you draw your gun, that's when you intend to kill. You've made up mentally in your mind to do that." When I became a police officer and I came across my senior training officer in the field and we would walk into a dangerous situation, he would say, "Where's your gun?" I go, "It's in my holster, I don't take it out unless I plan to kill somebody." And he says, "Oh no. You pull it out and you get it ready because somebody might be behind the door ready to take you out." So there's the training you have, but then there's the reality of the streets in which you have to make a call when you pull out your gun. So I do empathize and I do understand. But I have to confess to you that I have not agreed with every decision that has been handed down in that regard. But I understand that the first rule of every day is to go home alive. And when there is a potential threat, your training tells you, "Eliminate the threat. Eliminate it."

Now, the problem comes in recognizing humanity. Eighty-five percent of the people in this world are not aware of their social identity and who they are culturally.<sup>7</sup> I mean, people tell us we're male, people tell us we're female, people tell us we're Black or White, or whatever. We already know that statistically, as social scientists. We know that 15 percent of that 85 percent are people who avoid differences altogether. They don't talk about it, they just are in this avoidance mode. They just don't even think about "those people." In fact, there's too much anxiety for them to deal with it. So they go along in life happily pretending that there's no other people, but there's just me and my group. Then there's that second level group that has experienced differences and they've reacted to it in such a way that they develop a fear, I would say, a prejudice. Now, God wired us all to be prejudiced. There's nobody in this room who doesn't have prejudices. I'm sorry. God has wired us to stereotype. That's a part of human survival. We need to stereotype because we need to figure out who this person or those people are. We fill in the blanks ourselves when we don't fill in the right information. We all do that naturally because we're wired that way. The problem comes when we're not open to realizing that, instead of stereotyping serving us as servants, it becomes our masters. And my fear is that some police officers do indeed allow their stereotypical information

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7 Interculturalists such as Milton Bennett and Mitch Hammer produced results such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) based on grounded research that suggests that only approximately 15 percent of the people in the world achieve intercultural sensitivity beyond ethnocentrism, without an intervention to increase cultural self-awareness. See: Hammer and Bennett, "Measuring Intercultural Sensitivity: The Intercultural Development Inventory," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 27:4 (2003): 421-443.

to become the master at that moment in their judgment. And that's my opinion based on research in terms of these categories. But people who cannot humanize others because they allowed a stereotype to dehumanize the other for them, are more dangerous than any other group.

**Dr. Hollinger:**

Thank you, Mark, for very insightful comments and thank you all for coming for this very important discussion today. I think that what happened in Ferguson in both the killing of Michael Brown and in the events following give clear evidence that we have a lot of unfinished business in American society. All of us know that we have a very sad history when it comes to racial issues: the brutal institution of slavery, the Jim Crow Laws following emancipation, (which, as Mark says, continued up until the 1960s and were at the heart of the Civil Rights Movements), and of course the kinds of racism and prejudice that continue into the twenty-first century.

If you have not seen the movie *Selma*, let me really encourage you to see it. It is a very insightful movie, providing a lens into what happened in the 1960s Civil Rights Movement. People can quibble, as they do always about movies and their historical interpretation, but it is a very powerful movie and I commend it to you. In that movie, you see precisely what was going on in the 1960s, where a woman goes to register to vote and is asked all kinds of questions that I could not have answered with a Ph.D. She is denied the right to vote despite answering almost all the questions correctly, except for one bizarre question. It was a really unbelievable scene.

I spent the first ten years of my life living in southern Alabama in a very rural, remote, racist area. I remember it well as a child: the "white only" signs in restrooms, the "white only" signs in drinking fountains. I recall the reaction of my classmates when the Supreme Court handed down the decision of desegregation in the 1950s. Too often it seems to me that society at large and the Christian Church in particular have turned a blind eye to what was happening and is happening today. My sister and brother-in-law live near Chicago in a very highly educated area. They recently went to see the movie *Selma*. After the movie, they heard a woman say to her husband, "Did that really happen?" They went out into the corridor of the theatre and they heard a couple ask an older man who had clearly lived through the 1960s, "Did you ever hear about that in the news? Did you ever hear in the news about what was going on then?" And the response was, "I don't remember hearing much about it." I can tell you, as one having lived through the 1960s, you had to be in hibernation, to have your head in the sand, not to know what was going on in the 1960s with regards to the Civil Rights Movements. But the point is that many chose then and many choose now to deny reality.

As we think about Ferguson, the precipitating event and the responses to it, our own personal experiences and our perceptions on racial issues in general have a huge impact in how we respond. Even our interpretations of what may have or may not have happened with Michael Brown, a young African-American, and the white police officer Darren Wilson, are impacted by our experiences and by our perceptions. Those of you who have taken an ethics class with me know that one of the things I talk about is that our differences on ethical issues and social issues are not just about the differing principles we might use, or differing moral paradigms, or differing interpretations of the biblical text. Often our differences are about differing interpretations of the facts.<sup>8</sup> What was going on in the situation? Our empirical judgments about the realities around us have a profound impact and our perceptions and our experiences in life feed into that powerfully. This was brought home to me in a very clear way last fall. I was at a gathering of evangelical leaders and the president of NAE, the National Association of Evangelicals, told of an incident at a conference he attended a couple of years ago that was focused on racial justice and racial reconciliation. One of the African-American gentlemen who spoke asked a question. He said, "First

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<sup>8</sup> See Dennis Hollinger, *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 174-186.

of all I want to ask a question to my White brothers here. How many of you as Whites have taught your son that when you are pulled over by a police officer, you keep your hand on the steering wheel and you look straight ahead?" No hands went up. He then said, "To my Black brothers, how many of you have taught your sons that if you're pulled over by a police officer, you keep your hands on the steering wheel and you look straight ahead?" Ninety percent of the African-American hands went up. As a white male, I have never been pulled over because of the color of my skin. I do not know what that is like. And I think police officers probably had some traffic violations they could have pulled against me for speeding a bit, but I have not had to endure what my brothers on each side of me have had to endure just in that arena of life. Obviously, our social contexts powerfully shape our perceptions of what is happening and those perceptions impact how we respond to events like Ferguson.

As I think about Ferguson and the protest responses, it drives me to ask, "What is a healthy society? What is a healthy community?" One way of thinking about this is to say that a healthy society is one that can hold three things together and hold them together in a kind of healthy tension. Those three are: justice, freedom and order. If you have a society in which one of those dominates and the others are neglected, you are bound to have trouble. And, actually, I think the case can be made that historically, these three things (justice, freedom, order) represent differing theories about political life and about the nature and purpose of the state.<sup>9</sup> First, a society that emphasizes all justice and freedom but no order would end up with what? Anarchy. When you have anarchy, it is pretty hard to achieve justice and you often end up in a very oppressive state, despite the original purpose of achieving freedom. Many have noted that that is precisely what happened in the eighteenth century with the French Revolution. However, a society that emphasizes order and neglects freedom and justice tends towards oppression. Rights are neglected and freedom is minimized. It seems to me that we need a society, in terms of both the political order and the culture at large, that is truly committed to justice, which means procuring basic rights for all and making sure that there are fair mechanisms in place. This reflects the systemic part that Mark mentioned: mechanisms in place to ensure justice. Second, we need freedom for all people to live and work as they desire; to carry on life as they determine. I often like to point out that our plea for freedom will mean that some people in their freedom will choose ways of life that will be contrary to our Christian commitments. But we ensure that freedom as long as that freedom does not stamp upon the freedom and justice of others. And, third, we need order in which lawlessness is held in check and people are held accountable by both law and, as a last resort, by force in order to maintain order in that society.

My sense is that what happened in Ferguson in both the precipitating event and the aftermath, particularly in terms of the local government as well as the state of Missouri, was that order dominated to the neglect of freedom and justice. And, when that happens, it is bound to result in protest and, unfortunately, there is often counter violence to the initiating or precipitating violence. As Dr. Martin Luther King so powerfully evidenced in his life and teaching and as was so lucidly portrayed in the movie *Selma*, there is a place for peaceful protest and sometimes even thoughtful civil disobedience to bring about change in a society.<sup>10</sup> The intentions and the parameters of the protest must of course be abundantly clear as it always was for Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movements in the 1960s. What Dr. King knew so well, and I think was forgotten in Ferguson, is that justice, freedom, and order must go hand-in-hand. All three must exist in a healthy tension with each other. One can, I believe, make a case biblically and theologically for each of those three.

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<sup>9</sup> For a more detailed analysis of this see Dennis Hollinger, "The Purpose of Government: A Theological Perspective," in Timothy Demy and Gary Stewart (eds.), *Politics and Public Policy: A Christian Response* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2000), 23-36.

<sup>10</sup> For an insightful account of the civil right movement seeking change see Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).



I believe that we need to make strides in American society and in other societies around the world as well, as we are not the only country that has a race or ethnic problem. It is everywhere; it is ubiquitous throughout the entire world. Travel into any society and you will find it. And, if we are to make strides on these issues, it seems to me that we need to be committed to that very healthy tension. We do not like tensions, but conceptually, sometimes tensions are the best way in which we can live, holding together justice, freedom, and order. And of course these commitments must begin in the Church.<sup>11</sup>

**Dr. Price:**

As always it's a privilege to be here and I thank all of you for your attention and your prayers through this dialogue. I think this is a very important conversation, one that we all come to with our own perspectives, proclivities, and perceptions, as well. And I think it's healthy to have this conversation here at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. I always wonder, "Why is it that there are not more of these kinds of conversations at places like Gordon-Conwell, amongst those of us who are seeking God's guidance in these situations? Why is it not that the public conversation starts here?" So my approach to this is as a person who was born and reared in the city of Los Angeles, California. Some people call where I was reared south central, but there is really no south central Los Angeles. And so, it seems to me, growing up in the midst of the legendary gang rivalries between the Bloods and the Crips,<sup>12</sup> and arguably one of the most corrupt police departments in the country under the leadership of Daryl Gates,<sup>13</sup> that our realities are not always shared. I want to start there because it's hard to have a common approach to seeing these situations and these scenarios, when our lenses are not the same. Dr. Hollinger talked about the differing approach to the gentleman who talked about the hands on the steering wheel when the cops pulled him over. I learned that at six, and I remember it vividly because six was around the time when my parents allowed me to walk down the street to the home of one of my surrogate grandmothers; she often watched me afterschool or when my parents were working. I had to learn the rules of engagement before I was allowed out of the house independently. And, so, if you talk about a young person with an anxiety of the realities of life versus someone who doesn't have that anxiety, you're talking about two very different worlds. For some, freedom sounds and looks different, justice sounds and looks different, and order sounds and looks different because, from my perspective, order was either not getting caught or being able to have safe passage from one place to another place. It was never the sense that the civil servants were there to serve and protect you; they were there to protect and serve everybody else but you. Whether that's right or wrong, I can't get into that right now, but the reality of certain individuals when we come to the table to have this conversation is different. That's why in certain areas when people say that "justice delayed is justice denied,"<sup>14</sup> it becomes difficult to have the divine patience to wait for that moment when we all are equal and all can

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11 For an account of Evangelicals and race see Peter G. Heltzel, *Jesus and Justice: Evangelicals, Race and American Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). For a concrete proposal for dealing with racism in society see Joseph Barndt, *Understanding and Dismantling Racism: The Twenty-First Century Challenge to White America* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007).

12 During the 1970s and 1980s, gang violence in Los Angeles was at an all-time high primarily due to the highly publicized rivalry between the Bloods and the Crips. Each was a network of smaller sets, or clusters of gangsters who had dominion over certain neighborhoods, or regions, otherwise known as turfs. Each turf was demarked by coded graffiti and in some cases colored signage.

13 From 1978 to 1992, Daryl Gates served as Chief of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and was responsible for the development of militarized tactics to combat rising street gang violence. He is cited as the co-creator of the Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT) and was a huge advocate of the use of the Public Disorder and Intelligence Division (PDID) and Community Resources Against Street Hoodlums (CRASH), all of which preyed on inner-city neighborhoods, causing tremendous collateral damage, destruction, and death. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daryl\\_Gates](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daryl_Gates) accessed on 18 May 2015.

14 Although not its origin, the reference is most notably attributed to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (published in *Why We Can't Wait* [New York, NY: Penguin, 1964]), where he writes, "Justice too long delayed is justice denied." Activists of numerous movements have used various derivatives of this quotation to demand expediency in addressing systemic oppression.

benefit from justice. My colleagues here have talked about the notion of power and about white privilege and what I would call systems of oppression. I will talk about the fact that reconciliation really doesn't come until we focus on the common denominators as well as "the least of these." Reconciliation does not come until we focus on the common denominators. Because, when we come to the table, when we come to talk about racial reconciliation, whoever's representing the various races or ethnicities and nationalities at the table always comes with an agenda. There are certain things that we want, but the question is always, "What are you willing to give up?" And that's when the table goes silent. When we talk about the freedoms that come with privilege, or the freedoms that come with the sense of privileged justice, or the freedom that comes from a sense of privileged order, and the fact of having to give up those privileges, that's a conversation we don't want to have. And so, that's why we often talk about the conversation of racial relations in terms of relationships to one another as opposed to racial reconciliation. We're just not ready to have the racial reconciliation conversation yet, because that means a shift of power. And we've been kind of taught, depending on our mental approaches, that power is not necessarily yielded, it's taken. And so you have here this tension in terms of "What do you do when you want to do the right thing, but you're not necessarily willing to give up anything?"

That's why I love the whole section in Acts 2-5. When you talk about the early church, you see that the early church was really forming fellowship and community, particularly in Acts 2 around 42-47 where it says they were selling all of their possessions. We often fantasize about that type of sacrificial commitment by saying, "It takes a village," but usually that's an outward thing. I remember living in Los Angeles and we had some churches that were doing phenomenal global mission work and they were raising money for fresh water over here (globally) and raising money for clothes over there (globally), and I would always say to them, "People, right outside your church, outside of the gate that you put up, you have people who need fresh water and who need clothes." Far too often we forget about the "least of these" right outside our front doors. We're doing good work; we're doing global missionary work. And I'm not suggesting that's not good. I believe God has called some of us to do some of that good global missionary work, but I also believe that he has called some of us to be local missionaries in our own backyards, in our own local neighborhoods.

So, the fact is that semantics, how we understand the meaning of these situations, is really important. So such consciousness-raising causes anxiety, but disruption is necessary. I would argue it's necessary because, if we didn't have disruption, then this aggregation of wonderful saints in this room wouldn't be here. We wouldn't have certain institutions where women could actually be educated. We wouldn't have opportunities for people of color and such marginalized people, if there was not disruption. Selma, the movie, was about a moment in time which was disruptive. Whether we perceive it as disorder versus disruption - I'll leave that to you to decide and to distinguish between the two - disruption allows us to get out of our comfort zones and to realize again what the common denominators are and who "the least of these" are.

When we look at the scenario in Ferguson and an eighteen year old African-American male who was doing whatever he was doing, but received spontaneous capital punishment, we would rather spend more time justifying why "he should have" versus lamenting with his parents. We spend more time trying to justify what happened in our perception of the facts than thinking about the other young people who were there and the anxieties that they now carry. We spend more time trying to figure out what lawyer is going to use what trick to get this and not get this - "Why didn't they have a special prosecutor?" "Who's on the jury box" - instead of trying to bring healing to a city that will forever be scarred.

And, for me, that's where the conversation is. Because we can talk about what he did and didn't do, but I could talk about the Apostle Paul and what he did or didn't do and the fact that Paul received forgiveness and became a phenomenal ambassador for Christ's love because he got a chance to live. And, so it comes down to life or death, which, is the source of the anxiety.

As a Black man, I got pulled over three months ago by a police officer. Now, I get to talk all over the world, phenomenal places. I'm on the radio once a week on WGBH, which is, you know, Boston's NPR station, and I got pulled over three months ago! And guess what I did? I put my hands on the steering wheel and when the police officer came to the window, my window was up, my wife was sitting in the passenger seat of the minivan, my two sons were behind me, and my father-in-law was behind me. And the officer says, "Your license and registration." I still have my hands on the steering wheel and I said, "Officer, I'm going to release my left hand off the steering wheel to push the button on my door to roll the window down." This is what my father taught me at the age of six. Talk about anxiety. Every move that I made, I announced it first. "Officer, I'm taking my left hand and I'm going to put it in my left pocket to retrieve my wallet, which I will bring up and I will sit it on the steering wheel so you can watch me open my wallet to pull my license out. It's on the left side, there's a flap here." And so the officer looked at me and he looked in my van and saw my wife, saw my eleven year old and my nine year old whose eyes were big and bulging because they already understood what to do but had never seen me have to do it. So, they carry the anxiety as well. They didn't know what was going to happen to me.

And so the point that I'm trying to make is that we all come to this conversation from different places and, before we can have the conversation, we have to acknowledge what our platforms are, we have to acknowledge where we enter this conversation. That's why the challenge in this country and around the world of having these conversations of race relations, which will eventually, I pray, get to racial reconciliation, is the first conversation to be transparent and vulnerable, to allow fears to be heard, to allow concerns and cares to be voiced, and for each you to express where you're coming from. Because, when we put our cards on the table, we disarm one another. Then we can actually have real conversation which brings real healing, which brings forward progress, which brings, I believe, glory to God.

***Response by Dr. Patrick Smith<sup>15</sup>:***

Thanks to each of you for your participation on this panel. It is a very, very important conversation and resonated much with me. Dr. Harden, I'd love to hear you maybe chat just a little bit about a distinction between "law enforcement" and "policing" and maybe a distinction between bad policing and good policing and maybe the recent rise in the kind of the militarizing of policing probably in the last approximate twenty-five years. And, then, Dr. Price and Dr. Hollinger, if you could touch a little bit as you mentioned, Dr. Price, about the first conversation being about being vulnerable and expressing where we're coming from. One of the challenges that many African-Americans have had in talking about this whole thing is the fact that oftentimes they don't feel that at least, let's say, African-American males can be angry, because to become angry about something becomes life threatening. So, maybe, you both can reflect a little bit on the role of anger with respect to perceived social injustice in Christian ethics.

*Dr. Harden:* That last question was tough, so I'll let Dr. Hollinger handle that. But I think your question really is a good one and, again, let me offer a little historical context. By the way, I too was taught as Emmett was. I don't think I was yet six years old, but I was taught, and reinforced throughout my whole life, how to behave with police officers. And I thought I was doing a pretty good job and, yet, as a teenager, I was beaten by police officers. So, even though I'm proud of my career in police work, at that time, I had to be able to overcome those challenges and still become a police officer, which is another story, another forum. But in the 1980s, the militarization of law enforcement began to grab hold. Laws changed. We had administrative laws come in where the "bad guy," especially as it relates to drugs, knew the laws and they knew what they could get away with and so one of the things that would often happen is that people would get arrested and they would have so much money, they would be able to get their money back even being caught in their

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<sup>15</sup> Dr. Patrick Smith is Associate Research Professor of Theological Ethics and Bioethics at Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC.

role in the crime. Then we changed the laws, the administrative laws, so we could take their money from them. These were “forfeiture laws.” A lot of it started in Los Angeles. A strong emphasis grew out of the ‘70s on policing. So when you say “policing” to me, that means, as a police officer, I could walk down the street on a beat and say, “hi” to someone. They would give me a drink of soda out of their backyard barbecue party and I could know everybody’s name in the barbershop into which I walked. As a police officer, people knew me and they called me. So there was this kind of, you know, “they watched my back,” that was the expectation. That, if I get in trouble, if I can’t get to my radio, you guys, you’ll call help for me. There was this community relationship building and what we found out, by research, is that that was what so effectively developed programs such as D.A.R.E.. Many of you heard of D.A.R.E., an education for children in schools against drugs. That was almost like a partnership through policing. And, the image that they burned in our mind was that, if you were an effective police officer, then you never have to draw your gun. When I became a police officer, some of the best officers I admired were those who never drew their gun. They never raised their voice because they knew the escalation matrix that happened when you raise your voice.

You know, I was stopped a few weeks ago and the officer came to my car and he yelled at me. And my hands were on the steering wheel and I was confused because I thought I was doing everything I was supposed to do. But I thought to myself, “Like whoa. We were taught that the state police were the model police officers because, when they gave you a ticket, you thank them because they were so nice about it.” Can you imagine saying, “Thank you officer,” for a \$190 ticket? And so that’s what we refer to in policing. But, now enforcement and apprehension are both another thing entirely. It seems to me in recent years, being able to fight (i.e., enforcement) against the rise of using drugs and the apprehension of bad guys, was being emphasized. In the ‘80s and ‘90s, if you recall, drug wars escalated, not only between rival drug dealers and their gangs, but even with the police. And so that contributed to the change of mindset in terms of the politicians and the government and army police officers.

But what we’re talking about now is how did we lose sight of policing? That’s a very good question. And, so, when we think about remedies and so forth, we have to think about what we’re asking for. Are we asking for police officers to wear full armor, more armor, and fire larger bullets? I don’t even know if they can get larger, or are we asking for more policing?

*Dr. Hollinger:* Can I just follow up with a question on that, Mark? I often hear people say that one ought to be able to shoot to wound and prevent as opposed to shoot to kill. Is that just an unrealistic idea, would you say as a former police officer? Or could that be implemented as well?

*Dr. Harden:* It’s totally unrealistic. We’re trained to shoot twice and both are in the kill area. We never shoot to wound. Police officers are not trained to do that. There’s a case law behind that rationale and there’s also anecdotal evidence of surviving an incident so you never shoot someone because, when you use your firearm, it is considered deadly force. And courts have ruled that, once you use it, it’s deadly for you. You can’t use a handgun to partially kill somebody. That’s just the general rule.

*Dr. Price:* This notion of anger, I think it’s a great, great, great topic because, you know, I used to believe - and I don’t believe this anymore - but I used to believe that it was sinful to be angry. I had a Sunday school teacher at some point in my life who would teach it’s sinful to be angry, but my own reading of the Bible says that anger is part of human nature. The challenge is not to allow your anger to make you sin. And I think that’s where the distinction is. Yes, there are a number of individuals, black, white, yellow, blue, magenta, fuchsia, who have anger that has not been dealt with and so, for me, part of our Christian journey and part of our faith walk is really to deal with those unreconciled issues that we have along the way. Pastorally, I find a lot of young men of color who have a chip on their shoulder and whether the chip is reasonable or not is not my issue. The

issue is: let's do the work to get rid of the chip because there's a lot of life to be lived and you're not living to your fullest or as abundantly as you can be living, as the word says, with the chip on your shoulder. And, so, a part of our challenge as pastors and as clergy is to help people deal with their unreconciled issues where anger is a huge one. Part of the notion is that there's a role of forgiveness in this situation. There's a role for expressing your fears and your frustrations, but also your failed expectations. And, I think, in those conversations we're actually able to deal with our anger. If there's something that I'm angry about right now, it's about the privatization of the prison industrial complex. I'm angry about that. That people are endeavoring to make a whole lot of money on what we're calling the preschool-to-prison pipeline. Where they identify individuals, mostly in inner-city situations, and basically say that, based on their early examinations, they're not going to be anything so we're going to create "a cot and three hots" for them, because they're going to end up in prison. The bed in the prison cell is the cot. And the three meals a day are the three hots. We're going to create a trajectory by which we know that we're going to need "x" amount of prison cells in the coming years, so we're going to build these prisons with private investors who will actually make money on this. I'm absolutely angry about that, but I pray that my anger doesn't create sin. And so, I think, we try to reconcile that.

*Dr. Hollinger:* My take on that is that anger is, first of all, a good gift of God and, like many of the good gifts of God, it can get misused in our fallenness. And I do not think we can deal with issues of justice without some degree of anger. When I watched Selma and I saw the woman turned away by the clerk when she went to register to vote, I was angry. I mean I said something out loud and I do not know if Mary Ann remembers it. I was just visceral! I do not think we can deal with injustices without anger. So I look at it that there has got to be several different kinds of anger. There is, as Emmett said, that anger which is a sin. Be angry and yet do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath. But there is an anger which is a more principled anger. Then there is an anger which takes control of us emotionally and we lose all perspective. That emotion is not balanced by other good emotions, which I think are important to achieve harmony and make progress in our lives and in society as a whole. I would simply add to that, Scripture describes God, the wrath of God, the anger of God, which I take it is not just a rage kind of anger, but a more principled anger at the wrong, the sin, and the violations of human beings in our world.

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# The Nickel Mines Massacre and the Amish Theology of the Atonement and Discipleship<sup>1</sup>

WOODROW E. WALTON

On October 2, 2006, near the Amish community of Nickel Mines in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, a man entered the West Nickel Mines School and opened fire, killing five school children and injuring five others before turning the gun on himself and shooting himself to death. The event horrified the nation when the news media carried the details of the tragedy. Television news people and journalists flocked to the area. The aftermath of this terrible act was even more stunning when the reaction of the grieving parents and the whole Amish community was reported by all the media. These Amish parents and their friends forgave the now deceased killer and extended forgiveness and mercy toward his family. This set the news people and talk-show hosts talking and discussing how anybody could forgive such a terrible deed. What kind of people are these Amish? It was the talk of the nation for weeks.

Jesus taught his disciples that, when they pray, they should ask forgiveness from God as they themselves forgave others (Matt 6:12). But is it not going too far to forgive a mass killer of children?

It is my purpose to look further into this matter of forgiveness as extended by these Amish people and to connect it with their understanding of the work of Christ referred to as the atonement and their comprehension of Christian discipleship referred to by them as *Gelassenheit*, “total yieldedness.” This German term describes one’s relationship to the crucified and risen Christ Jesus. In the eyes of the Amish and the Mennonites from which they originated in the seventeenth century, the relationship with Jesus is a totally yielded life to the risen Christ Jesus, nothing held back, nothing held in reserve. As He forgave from the Cross, so are we to forgive.

The Amish understanding of the atonement, discipleship, and forgiveness has very deep roots beginning with Jesus and extending through John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia in the early days of the church. In a sermon on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians, Chrysostom remarked that “if Christ did not rise again, neither was he slain, and if he was not slain, our sins have not been taken away, we are still in them, and our entire faith is meaningless” (39:4). The Amish would add, “If we do not forgive, we make light of the Cross of Christ and His Resurrection.” In the late fourth and early fifth century, Theodore of Mopsuestia (died 428), proclaimed in his *Pauline Commentary from the Greek Church* that “forgiveness of sins comes through the Resurrection.” Yes, but . . . for a mass killer of innocent children?? Yes, say the Amish, and also their Mennonite forbears.

Total yieldedness to Christ Jesus and His way of doing things, as spelled out in the gospels and particularly in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, recorded between Matthew 5 and Matthew 7, was not peculiar to just the Mennonite branch of the Anabaptist reforms of the 16th century. It was peculiar to most of the Anabaptists who used the term to describe the nature of the regenerate life: a life totally yielded to God and detached from all created things that one may depend on as of greatest or ultimate value instead of dependence upon God.

Early Anabaptist leader Pilgram Marpeck wrote a tract on the idea of *Gelassenheit*, which has been lost, but reference is made to it in *The Works of Pilgram Marpack*, since edited by William

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1 This revised article was first presented as a paper, November 18, 2010, at the 62nd Annual Convention of the Evangelical Theological Society in Atlanta, GA. It is dedicated in memory of Ida Roadcap Turner, great-grandmother, Old Order German Baptist Brethren; Franklin Rhodes, great uncle, Mennonite, later Church of the Brethren; and Hettie Turner Rhodes, great aunt, Church of the Brethren. All Bible quotations are from the ESV.

Klassen and Walter Klaasen.<sup>2</sup> For Marpeck, *Gelassenheit* not only meant attachment to Christ Jesus and His Way, but also that the believer in Christ also surrenders all attachment to created things, particularly when it comes to property. Adherence to things is self-centeredness which has no place in the life of the Christian and in the Church of Christ. Despite this severe judgment call, he did not argue for community of goods. Private property is good to have, but it is also something to which there should be no attachments. *Gelassenheit* entails true surrender to Jesus and to none else.

What this means for forgiveness is simply this: what Jesus *did*, we do. This does not mean “perfectionism” for either Marpeck, Simons, or Jacob Amman (1656-1730), the namesake of the Amish. The Amish are of Swiss Mennonite origin, but Amman, in 1693, took issue with Swiss Mennonite leaders Hans Reist and Benedict Schneider over what he considered to be a lack of sufficient discipline within “Mennonite” congregations. Amman was more consistent with Dutch Mennonite beliefs than with the Swiss and reflects the thinking present in Menno Simons’ 1541 “A Kind Admonition on Church Discipline.”

In reality, it would not be technically correct to indicate that Amman split from the Swiss branch of the Mennonites as neither Reist nor Schneider would refer to themselves as Mennonites but called themselves Swiss Brethren. In any case, Amman was highly influenced by Simons and the Amish faction gravitated toward a close association with the Dutch Mennonites.

Both the Dutch Mennonites and the later Amish off-shoot had a strong sense of Christ’s atoning work on the Cross as a “covering” of all sin. Their acknowledgment of receiving forgiveness from the Cross of Christ compels them to forgive. Forgiveness is not so much a discipleship issue as it is a salvation issue. Forgiveness and salvation are of the same single fabric, the warf and the woof. They are indicated as such by Jesus’ parable of the unmerciful servant as recorded in Matthew 18:21-35. The Amish, as well as the Mennonites, do not hold to either a penal theory of the atonement, nor do they adhere to a satisfaction theory. If anything, they hold on to a “narrative *Christus victor*” position, best made explicit by Mennonite J. Denny Weaver in his work *Keeping Salvation Ethical*.<sup>3</sup>

One cannot disassociate the Amish from the Mennonites as they hold to a common Anabaptist heritage. Weaver of Bluffton College, a Mennonite school in Ohio, acknowledges a commonality among Mennonites and Amish on the work of Christ in his 1996 book, *Keeping Salvation Ethical: Mennonite and Amish Atonement Theology in the Late Nineteenth Century*.<sup>4</sup> Salvation is totally of God’s grace through faith, but not through faith alone, **but neither** is salvation by works either. Salvation is by grace which activates a response. The perfect example of this is when Jesus meets Zacchaeus. Salvation entered Zacchaeus’ home and Zacchaeus responded, “Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and, if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much” (Luke 19:8). Forgiveness activates forgiveness.

Forgiving and forgiveness have not lacked attention from among Christians and even from among others throughout the centuries but they have never been considered as inherent in the Atonement or integral and inseparable from the work of Christ. They differ from grace and works as in Roman Catholic thought. They differ from Luther’s understanding of salvation as by grace alone; yet they are not that dissimilar as Menno Simons and his spiritual descendants over the centuries concur with Luther, though pointing out that the “call” of grace is also a call “to follow.” To be forgiven and have one’s sin covered is to forgive. Jesus told a parable, recorded in Matthew 18:23-35, of a certain ruler who wanted to settle accounts with his servants, one of whom owed him an enormous amount of money. The man was forgiven his debt, which would have taken a

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2 William Klassen and Walter Klaasen, eds. *Marpeck: A Life of Dissent and Conformity*, Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History 44 (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1973), 549.

3 J. Denny Weaver, *Keeping Salvation Ethical: Mennonite and Amish Atonement Theology in the Late Nineteenth Century*, Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History 35 (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1997).

4 Ibid.

lifetime and more to pay off. The same man soon thereafter accosted an individual who owed him but a small debt amounting to just a day's pay and had him thrown into debtor's prison. Needless to say, word got back to the ruler, who was furious at the injustice. Forgiveness necessitates forgiveness.

Anabaptist theology, particularly Mennonite-Amish, discerns and perceives a direct link between atonement and discipleship. Jesus' parable was given in response to Peter's question about how many times a person should be forgiven as though there is a limit to forgiveness. God in Christ forgave us without reservation; therefore, we forgive without reservation—no holding back.

This does not mean that forgiveness is an automatic unreflective response. It is often learned. This is where discipleship comes in, it is learned through keeping fellowship with Jesus in the pain and out of it. Johannes Moser (1826-1908), a Swiss Mennonite, recognized that there is a lifelong growth process that continues "so long as we dwell in these earthly huts. The battle between flesh and spirit continues until the angel of death removes us from the battlefield."<sup>5</sup>

The families who lost their children in the Nickel Mines School massacre felt pain and grief and the forgiveness was not automatic, but it was ingrained within them from youth to forgive. Moser recognized there is a learning process to forgiveness, but he was also traditionalist enough to agree with the Amish David Beiler by tying the new birth and the obedient life together into one reality: "Thus all reborn Christians must be so minded that they follow the command of Jesus Christ in all obedience."<sup>6</sup> It is the frame of mind that concludes, "I have been forgiven; I, therefore, as a follower of Christ am not to seek vengeance but to seek to be able to forgive and to forgive." It is a unique frame of mind which is also tied to the Mennonite-Amish belief in non-violence. Beiler, who lived in the late 19th century, as did Moser, and Stauffer, is a spokesman for the Old Order Amish view which includes not taking vengeance.

Beiler holds that Christians are those who nonresistantly follow Jesus and submit to Him and the community of the Church, and not just those who merely relate a specific kind of spiritual experience. His stress of the necessity of conversion and the life of obedience to Christ following conversion resembles the outlook of Old Order Mennonite Jacob Stauffer (1811-1855), another major figure in America's Mennonite and Amish experience.

Randy Keeler, Assistant Professor of Religion at Bluffton University, a Mennonite school in Bluffton, Ohio, wrote that an Anabaptist understanding of the atonement "would insist that salvation cannot be reduced to a verbal assent to Jesus' lordship. . ." It includes "a life lived in accordance with the reign of God. The kingdom of God is among us because God's people live out that kingdom ethic in the here and now."<sup>7</sup> Living out includes living out God's act of grace in forgiveness. Keeler cites J. Nelson Kraybill, who suggests that when communicating with another what faith in Jesus involves, one needs to describe what one does when becoming a follower of Jesus. Kraybill's "Four Spiritual Truths of a Peacemaking God" describes the faith relationship.<sup>8</sup> There is no way that the Christian life which involves the act of forgiving can be considered as separate from salvation. All Anabaptists discern God's forgiveness, our salvation, our forgiving, as one single thread beginning with God and continuing in the reborn life.

This needs to be borne in mind when dealing specifically with the West Nickel Mines School incident in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The forgiveness extended to Charles Carl Roberts IV and his own family is not peculiar to the one West Nickel Mines district of the Amish community. Children from there, East Nickel Mines, and Northeast Georgetown, attended the school. Donald

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5 Johannes Moser, "Der Menschen Sterblichkeit," *Der Herold der Wahrheit* 15.9 (Sept. 1878): 147. Quoted by J. Denny Weaver in *Keeping Salvation Ethical*, 92.

6 David Beiler, "Wahre Christenthum," 226, quoted by Weaver, *Keeping Salvation Ethical*, 142.

7 Randy Keeler, "An Anabaptist Theology of Youth Ministry" in *The Work of Jesus Christ in Anabaptist Perspective* by Alain Epp Weaver and Gerald J. Mast (Telford, PA: Cascadia Publishing House, 2008), 332.

8 J. Nelson Kraybill, "Four Spiritual Truths of a Peacemaking God," *The Mennonite* (Nov. 4, 2003), 10.

Kraybill, writing of the incident in the book *Amish Grace*, reported an Amish man recalling that “the grief and funeral preparations didn’t fall on the members of just one district.”<sup>9</sup> It touched the lives of those in the thirty Amish schools within the four-mile radius of Georgetown.

Taking their cue from the Bible, the Amish, wherever they are, take their discipleship with Jesus seriously and beyond that of Jesus’ saying: “And when you stand praying, if you have anything against someone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses” (Mark 11:25,ESV). One Amish woman from Georgetown, Pennsylvania, appearing in silhouette on CBS’s *Early Show*, shared with the interviewer, “We have to forgive him in order for God to forgive us.”<sup>10</sup> This extends further to not taking vengeance and exercising resistance. It adds nothing but more violence. The Mennonite-Amish view of the Atonement is a non-violent one. Jesus did not resist. He was as a lamb led to be slaughtered. By his death and his resurrection, he won his victory over violent men. Also, in the words of an Amish father, “We believe in letting our light shine, but not shining it in the eyes of other people.”

There were those who questioned the wisdom of the Amish offering such forgiveness. Jeff Jacoby, a journalist with the *Boston Globe*, was one and Cristina Odone of Great Britain’s *Observer*, another. She was less concerned about the forgiveness issued and more concerned about she saw as the fatalism she believed was inherent in Amish life. She was way off the mark and displayed her complete ignorance of Amish life, history, and belief.

The Amish are a private people, but they are, nonetheless, notable and attract attention. The Amish, of Dutch, Alsatian, and Swiss background are bi-lingual and, in some cases, tri-lingual, and those in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, have a dialect characterized as “Pennsylvania Dutch.” This lingual characteristic also distinguishes them besides their horses and buggies.

The Amish are not uniform. There is a diversity, though they adhere very strongly to a unity of Christian belief as laid out in the Dordrecht Confession of Faith in 1632 and adopted April 21, 1632, by a Dutch Mennonite Conference held at Dordrecht, Holland. There are 18 articles of faith from “Of God and the Creation of All Things” to “The Resurrection of the Dead, and the Last Judgment.” It was originally signed by individuals from seventeen different regions. The Amish, it needs to be remembered, are of Mennonite origin and reflect a more plain lifestyle, and the differences among the Amish are of degree, not kind. There are the more progressive Amish and those referred to as Old Order. Since there is no hierarchical structure, decisions are made locally, and, with 1800 different Amish communities, presently, across the United States of America and Canada, diversity is assured. Beyond the 18 Articles of the Dordrecht Confession, there is also a long history of persecution and a rejection of vindictiveness or getting even. Getting even or seeking vengeance only breeds more violence.

The Mennonite and Amish are often characterized as holding strongly to the teachings of Jesus as they are especially stated within the Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew 5-7. That is true to a certain extent, but leaves out their comprehension of the work of Christ on the cross and the reborn life. Carrying out Jesus’ teachings in the Sermon on the Mount apart from the new birth occasioned by God’s grace is impossible.

All other considerations of forgiveness as extended by the Amish miss the mark. The remarks and criticisms discussed by journalists, onlookers, and many scholars, social workers, and psychologists, leave out the equation of Christ’s words from the Cross, which was itself a cruel, unjustified, violent act: “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34, ESV).

One need only to recall another notorious incident coming out of World War II. While imprisoned in a Nazi concentration compound, Simon Wiesenthal was released one day from his

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9 Donald B. Kraybill, Steven M. Nolt, David L. Weaver-Zercher, *Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/John Wiley & Sons, 2007), 7.

10 Donald B. Kraybill, *Amish Grace*, 45.

work detail to attend the bedside of a dying member of the Secret Service. Haunted by the crimes in which he was a participant, the soldier wanted to confess to—and gain forgiveness from—a Jew. Faced with the choice between compassion and revulsion, justice and injustice, silence and truth, Wiesenthal, said nothing and walked away. That situation haunted Wiesenthal for years afterwards. Had he done the right thing? He wrote a book entitled *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness*, first published in 1969, then reissued in 1998 by Glyde publishers. In the second half of *The Sunflower*, a panel of respondents was presented with a wide range of responses and answers as to whether Wiesenthal did the right thing by his silence and walking away. Roman Catholic priest and educator Theodore Hesburgh, responded: “If asked to forgive, by anyone for anything, I would forgive because God would forgive.”<sup>11</sup> Radio talk show host Dennis Prager, who considered himself a devoted Jew, disagreed: “People can never forgive murder, since the one person who can forgive is gone, forever.” There were other responses and reactions. I read the book soon after hearing Ravi Zacharias mention it in an address at the 1994 North American Conference for Itinerant Evangelists held in Louisville, Kentucky.

What is interesting is to contrast and compare the two incidents. Kraybill does so in his book on the Nickel Mines Massacre, *Amish Grace*. While Kraybill raises the forgiveness issue in both the Wiesenthal and the Nickel Mines cases, he does not comment on what I feel is critical. Except for Hesburgh’s statement, “I would forgive because God would forgive,” there is an over-riding concern with accountability and settling scores in *The Sunflower*. The upshot of the Wiesenthal incident was the creation of The Simon Wiesenthal Center in November 1977 in Los Angeles and the New York Tolerance Center Wiesenthal fought for human rights and on behalf of the Jewish people to make things right. He is rightfully honored, but there is an unexpressed bitterness at the core. There is no forgiveness at work but a drive to promote toleration and nothing more.

But at the Nickel Mines School, there is no desire to get even or to rectify a wrong. There is a forgiveness which surpasses all comprehension, as it recalls an uncalled for and unjustified execution of an innocent man outside the gates of Jerusalem. The Amish and the Mennonites pattern their lives after the Crucified Jesus of Nazareth and base their lives and beliefs upon the resurrection of the Crucified One and believe in not responding in kind. They do not create Centers to remember their history of persecution or to promote toleration, as toleration has nothing to do with the promotion of God’s love among people, but getting along with others with minimal friction.

Forgiveness, Amish-style, has nothing to do with overlooking a wrong but has everything to do with looking past it. There is no vengeance. In the Amish Christian’s consciousness is what John L. Ruth calls “the cross of the innocent martyr—the sacrificial lamb.” It is “a guide to the nature of reality.”<sup>12</sup> At the start of their history in Europe, the Anabaptist forbears of the Mennonites and the later Amish faced, and then laid aside the option of taking up “God’s sin-avenging sword.” Vengeance is a divine, not a human prerogative.

Johann Christophe Arnold, in an updated and expanded 2009 edition of an earlier work done in the twentieth century and retitled *Why Forgive?*, offered a comment upon the Nickel Mines Amish response to the massacre which is worth quoting at the close: “. . . as far as open anger or hostility goes, the Amish hold, as they have for centuries, that it is destructive—a waste of energy that will hold them hostage and ultimately kill them, just like that daughters were held hostage and killed by someone else’s anger. To these devout followers of Jesus, the only answer is the one he offered on the Cross: ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’”<sup>13</sup> And that takes us back to the atonement.

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11 Quoted by Donald Kraybill in *Amish Grace*, 60.

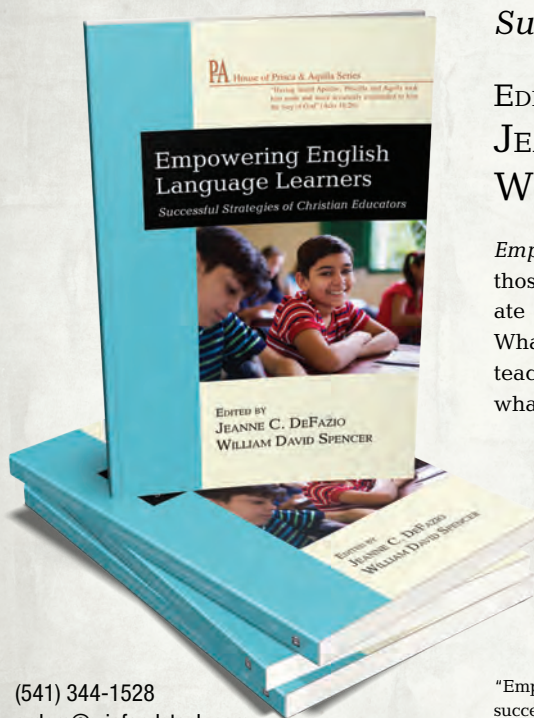
12 John L. Ruth, *Forgiveness: A Legacy of the West Nickel Mines Amish School* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 2007), 36.

13 Johann Christoph Arnold, *Why Forgive?*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2009), 208. Originally published by The Plough Publishing House of Church Communities International, Rifton, NY.



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# Religion and Church in China: Trends and Dynamics<sup>1</sup>

KEVIN XIYI YAO

## An Overview

In recent years, religion has repeatedly made headlines in China and abroad. In December of 2012, “Eastern Lightening,” a long-banned cult, suddenly burst into sight of the public. They publicly endorsed a popular doomsday prediction that the world would end on December 21, 2012, and launched aggressive, nationwide campaigns to urge people to repent and join their group before the apocalypse. Founded in the late 1980s, this group claims Christ has returned to the world, and a woman in Henan province has been identified as the second Christ. Those who do not accept her words will suffer severe punishment. Outlawed as an “evil cult” by the Chinese government a long time ago, it re-emerged in the name of the Church of Almighty God, but quickly found over one thousand of its key members rounded up by police. Severely suppressed in mainland China, it is still very active in Hong Kong and Taiwan, and currently headquartered in the United States.

During the summer of 2013, a Qigong master by the name of Wang Lin suddenly became the focus of public scrutiny. An obscure man living in a small county of the Jiangxi province, Mr. Wang claims he possesses such supernatural powers to cure terminal illness and perform all kinds of miracles including resurrecting a dead person. And he once bragged that American intelligence agencies were so impressed by his ability that they offered him a green card over 70 times. Throughout the years he has cultivated relationships with the rich and famous in the country, and obviously gained fame among them. And he has constantly been visited and consulted by top business people, government officials, and movie stars. The leaking of the numerous photos of him rubbing shoulders with the country’s elite immediately created a huge media sensation and online uproar. Mr. Wang was then forced to go into hiding, and Chinese authorities were said to consider prosecuting him for fraud.

What do these two recent incidents tell us about religion in nowadays China? First, we can say that, after almost thirty years of the communist attempts to eradicate religion, religion is not only alive, but actually flourishing in China today. And religion is playing an increasingly important role in that society. It is so much so that I would argue that it is no longer accurate to say China is a communist, atheist country. Instead, what we see in China is an increasingly religious society, even though the communist party is still in power.

Secondly, just as the country is in general, religious life in China is going through tremendous change. The collapse of the dominance of the communist ideology and the rise of a market economy has created a spiritual void that is yet to be filled. People in that country are hungry for new spiritual direction and new religious products. To meet such tremendous spiritual needs, all kinds of religions and ideologies are competing for bigger shares of the spiritual market. New religious or quasi-religious movements are clashing with conventional, organized religions, western religions clashing with native ones, all religions clashing with secular ideologies, and modern values clashing with post-modern ones. The result is a fluid, dynamic and even chaotic religious scene full of surprise and uncertainty, having become a hotbed for new religious ideas, practices, and movements. In my opinion, what we are witnessing in China right now is a massive religious experiment quite remarkable in modern world history.

This whole dynamic process was unleashed in the early 1980s, as the country embarked on economic and social reform. In the wake of the Great Cultural Revolution (1966-1976),

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1 Most of the contents of this essay were presented at the Boston Theological Institute Annual Dinner and Lecture 2013, held on October 3, 2013 in Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA.

the communist authority under the leadership of Mr. Deng Xiaoping realized that it is utterly unrealistic to turn China into a totally atheistic country in the foreseeable future. And these leaders decided to restore a much fine tuned policy and apparatus that aims to tolerate but contain and even manipulate religion to their own advantage. As a result, a great deal of religious freedom is granted, and significant room created for religious activities in the society. Not surprisingly, huge spiritual demands and adjustments of governmental policy have combined to create a social environment for an unprecedented religious boom and resulted in waves of religious revivals throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Yes, China's record of religious freedom may not be quite up to American standards yet, but I would argue that it has improved significantly throughout the years. There is no comparison between the kind of religious persecution of the 1960s and the kind of religious tolerance Chinese citizens enjoy today. I would challenge any attempt to lump China together with such countries as North Korea. And we need to be more aware of the complex and developmental nature of the church-state relation in China.

### The Rise of Christianity

When I mention religious revivals in nowadays China, I mean all kinds of religions: Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Christianity, Islam, folk religions, and new religious movements. Since the 1980s, many religious traditions have experienced a boom in one way or another. However, among all mainstream religions in China, most of China observers seem to agree, Protestantism has been the fastest growing one for the last several decades. It was said that throughout the 1990s millions of new members were added to the Protestant community. Today you can find in China one of the largest Protestant communities around the world: fifty to one hundred million believers, as estimated by many observers,<sup>2</sup> even though their percentage in the general population is still not high. Ironically, another indicator for the growing influence and status of Christianity is the mushrooming of "Christian cults" in the recent decades. Out of the fifteen so-called "evil cults" officially banned by the Chinese authority, twelve are the offshoots of Christianity.<sup>3</sup>

The Protestant Church in contemporary China is very dynamic, unconventional, and complex, often full of paradox, and defies any generalization. One of the most striking features of the Protestant church in China is perhaps that, instead of denominationalism, it is divided into the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) and the house church, or the official church and the underground church, as often referred to by some observers.<sup>4</sup> This division has much to do with the roles of the government. It is fair to say, ever since the 1950s, the church-state relation has been a crucial factor in the evolution of Christianity in China. Church life is very much shaped and over-shadowed by the government's religious policy and the church's attitude toward the political authorities. It remains so even today.

No one can deny that the 1980s belonged to the TSPM. Throughout the 1980s, the TSPM spearheaded the rehabilitation and growth of the Protestant community in China. And it was the most important, if not the only, voice for the entire church. Its achievements, such as Bible printing and theological education, are undeniable.

However, since the mid-1990s, the movement has been facing some unprecedented challenges even to the point of crisis. As many observers point out, the root problem is that the current TSPM was initiated and established in the 1950s. As Chinese society and culture are getting more pluralistic, diversified, and commercialized, the movement is increasingly lagging behind social and

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2 See the *World Christian Database* (Brill 2013).

3 Xi Wuyi, "Jian Lun Dang Dai Zhong Guo Xie Jiao Yang Bian De Li Shi Gui Ji " (On the Historical Trajectory of Cults in Contemporary China), in <http://www.globalview.cn/ReadNews.asp?NewsID=3948>.

4 A recent attempt to interpret this great dichotomy within the Protestant community in China has been made along the line of the "Magisterial Church vs Free Church." See Wang Ai Ming: "Jian Zhi Jiao Hui yu Zi You Jiao Hui: Wen Ti, Wei Ji he Ke Neng De Chu Lu " (The Established Church vs. Free Church: Problems, Crisis, and Solution), in [http://www.21ccom.net/articles/zgyj/gqmq/article\\_2013022077383.html](http://www.21ccom.net/articles/zgyj/gqmq/article_2013022077383.html).

cultural development at least in terms of its mode of thinking and current policy. Consequently, many believers feel their spiritual needs cannot be adequately met under the current structure. And the TSPM seems to have been outgrown quantitatively and qualitatively by the house church movement. It is no wonder that the TSPM's status as the only voice of the Protestant church in China is apparently challenged and its legitimacy is being increasingly questioned. In other words, the TSPM is facing the danger of being marginalized.

Since the 1990s, the house churches have been the fastest growing sector of Protestantism in China. Till the mid-1990s the house churches were still strongest in rural areas, and many of their members tended to be from marginal social groups such as women and the elderly. However, in recent years, the highest growth rate is found in urban areas and among the social elites.

As the house church is undergoing a historical demographic change, how to define the house church becomes a tricky issue. How to define the house church is always a tricky issue. Can you still categorize a congregation with several thousand members, which worships publicly in an office space but is not yet registered with the government as an underground house church? Is "unregistered church" a better term than house church? If the house churches share the same evangelical theological outlook with a majority of the Three-Self churches, then what exactly distinguishes the former from the latter? I would argue the defining factor is the house churches' shared attitude toward the TSPM: They all want to maintain their independence from the TSPM. And all house churches hold hostility, distrust, or at least reservations toward the TSPM, for they believe the TSPM is simply tied with the authorities too closely.

From the very beginning the house churches have demonstrated certain well-known features: theologically evangelical, highly indigenized, heavily relying on lay involvement and leadership, and very enthusiastic for evangelism. In fact, the house church movement has been a major missionary force responsible for the massive evangelistic efforts in Chinese society for the past decades and increasingly embraces the vision of world mission. The well-known "Back-to-Jerusalem Movement" may be controversial, but can certainly serve as an indicator of the kind of missionary enthusiasm and dynamics in China. And a growing role of the Chinese Church in worldwide missions is perhaps the next big thing for us to anticipate.

In any case, the division and tension between the TSPM and house church movement should not be exaggerated. The suspicion and hostility between them at the top level may be deep-rooted and intense. But it is much less so at the grass-roots level. Most of the TSPM churches share the same evangelical theological tradition with house churches. In other words, the differences between the two movements are largely historical, social, and political, rather than theological and doctrinal. In fact, at least at the grass-root level, there is often considerable cooperation between the TSPM and house congregations. This once again reminds us of the existence of a huge gray area in the religious life in China, which defies any black or white interpretation.<sup>5</sup> Of course, the reconciliation between these two sectors is no doubt desirable. But, given the formidable structural and psychological barriers, it is likely to take a long time before anything can happen at the national level.

From the 1980s to the present, the Roman Catholic Church in China also registered a significant growth, but it is dwarfed by its Protestant counterpart. As we know, the huge challenge facing the Catholic community in China is always its difficult relation with the Vatican; and the church is deeply divided over this issue. At this point, there seems to be very little hope for a major breakthrough in the stalemate between Beijing and the Vatican.

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<sup>5</sup> Sociologist Fenggang Yang's discussion of the Red, Black, and Gray Markets of religion in China is very helpful here. (See Fenggang Yang, *Religion in China, Survival and Revival under Communist Rule* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), chap. 5.)



## The Chinese Church in a World of Religious Pluralism

After three decades of tremendous social changes, the Protestant Church has apparently emerged as an early winner in the competing religions' scramble to fill in the Chinese people's spiritual void. Actually, an argument has been made that Christianity benefited much under the communists' effort to uproot all religious traditions from the country in the 1950s and 1960s, because the communists under the leadership of Mao cleared the ground for the Christian intrusion, and made possible the dramatic surge of the Church since the 1980s. In recent years, it has also become clear that the success of Christianity has turned the church into a sort of common enemy for many other religious and ideological contenders.

As the old ideological monopoly of Marxism is giving in to cultural and ideological diversity, traditional religions such as Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism and folk religions are all making a comeback. Along with declining Marxism and other secular ideologies, almost all major religious groups consider surging Christianity a great rival, perhaps a number one rival in the battle for China's soul. Endorsed by the Chinese government, they charge that Christianity as a Western religion served as a running dog of Western imperialism in the past and once again becomes a threat to Chinese cultural tradition and national identity today. And it is said that the unprecedented spread of Christianity profoundly tips the balance of the so-called "religious eco-system" which is critical to a stable and harmonious society. Therefore, every effort should be made to restore and sustain the balance of the "religious eco-system" for the country's best interest.<sup>6</sup> And even more ominously, a point has been frequently made that Christian missionary efforts in recent decades are actually a part of a Western conspiracy to undermine the rule of the communist party and China's sovereignty, and therefore should be treated as a potential menace to China's national and cultural security. Unfortunately, behind this kind of mentality and rhetoric the powerful influence of Samuel Huntington's theory of "Clash of Civilizations" looms large.<sup>7</sup> In China, Huntington's famous theory is always cited or misinterpreted to vindicate the alleged rivalry between the Chinese Confucian civilization and the Judeo-Christian civilization. And it provides many Chinese intellectuals with a convenient lens through which the rise of Christianity in their own country can be perceived and interpreted. Once church growth is perceived with a framework of "Clash of Civilization," it immediately takes on a whole set of new meanings, and becomes a part of a geo-political game between China and the West.

I am not saying this kind of nationalistic hostility or even resentment toward Christianity and geo-political consideration are the only driving forces behind the recent revivals of non-Christian religions in China. But nationalistic hostility is definitely one of the strongest and most significant forces. To counter-balance the growing popularity of Christianity and Western values, grass root religious groups joined hands with the government to promote native religions and traditional values that are identified as the soft power of the Chinese nation.<sup>8</sup> Extravagant rituals are staged to commemorate Confucius' birthday, Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist scriptures are re-printed and circulated, and efforts are made to instill Confucian values into the minds of young generations, and so on. Here is the irony of the day: a supposedly secular communist regime is spending tax payers' money in sponsoring a selected group of religious organizations and their activities; and a theoretically still atheist ruling party who attempted to eliminate all religions in China just twenty years ago has now found unlikely allies in certain religious groups in their joint efforts to contain or minimize the growing influence of allegedly Western religion. As happened many times in Chinese

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6 Mu Zhongjian, "Zhong Guo Zong Jiao De Duo Yuan Tong He Mo Shi (The Pluralistic and Harmonious Paradigm of Religious Ecosystem in China)," in [www.people.com.cn/24hour/n/2013/0614/c25408-21833645.html](http://www.people.com.cn/24hour/n/2013/0614/c25408-21833645.html).

7 See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

8 For an explanation of the concept of soft power, see Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1990); *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2004).



history, ideological correctness and orthodoxy are replaced by political expedience and religious favoritism, and political and ideological pragmatism seems to be in full swing. In any case, the restoration of Chinese religious tradition is well under way, and re-alignment of the religious and ideological scene seems to be inevitable. It is perhaps wishful thinking on the part of the Confucian faithful that the old religious order would be one day reinstated, which would put Confucianism in the center and all other traditions on the periphery. But future religious life in China will definitely be much more diverse and dynamic. Surely, there are already some sporadic friendly interactions and gestures of good will between different religious communities. However, as religious surge and rivalry are still the game of the day, and as the secular political force is still meddling in religion for political gain, a genuine interreligious dialogue remains a dream.

Christianity may have become the envy of others, but that does not mean that its future in China looks all rosy. In fact, after three decades of exponential church growth, many signs seemingly point to a slow-down. Frankly, I do not see any solid ground for such a prediction that “Christians will constitute 20 to 30 percent of China’s population,” the Chinese nation will be Christianized, and the country will adopt a new, “pro-Western” political direction accordingly.<sup>9</sup> For me, this kind of prediction is overly optimistic and even a bit triumphalistic.

In fact, Christianity is facing tremendous challenges and pitfalls in the China of the 21st Century. Internally, the Church will continue to wrestle with uncertain theological orientations, inadequate theological education, rampant heretical teachings, the rising tensions between church unity and emerging denominational identities, and so on. Externally, the Church will continue to cope with a swiftly changing society and persistent governmental pressure. Particularly relevant to our discussion are two following issues: First, in responding to rising nationalism and nativism in Chinese society, the Church once again has to reckon with its historical ties with western imperialism and colonialism, and work even harder to forge a genuine Chinese identity and image. Second, in responding to emerging religious pluralism, the Chinese Church has much soul-searching to do, and has a long way to go before a viable approach or strategy is in place. Right now there is considerable confusion over this issue. In my view, potentially, the most dangerous sign is the popularity of Christendom’s mentality and rhetoric among a large number of Chinese Christians. There is a lot of talk about how, eventually, to make Christianity the mainstream of Chinese culture and even to turn the country into a so-called “Christian” nation. And the rhetoric of Christian conquest and hegemony, which is reminiscent of nineteenth century missionary triumphalism and paternalism, can once again be heard from the lips of some Chinese believers and some of their Western supporters today. I always wonder how biblical and how realistic this sort of “grand vision” is. In my opinion, a vision of a faithful, loving, and humble Christian minority with a prophetic voice in a pluralistic world would be healthier and more desirable for the Church in China, for it is more akin to the Chinese churches’ evangelical heritage, more relevant to their context and their social status, and more conducive to their future in that great nation.

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<sup>9</sup> David Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity Is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, INC, 2003), pp. 287-289.

# Should the *Imago Dei* Be Extended to Robots? *Love and Sex with Robots*, the Future of Marriage, and the Christian Concept of Personhood

WILLIAM DAVID SPENCER

The 2007 publication of artificial intelligence expert David Levy's study, *Love and Sex with Robots*, extends the impact of such recent developments as same-sex marriage, marryyourpet.com, "Virtual Girlfriend" with predictions as this: "Accepting that huge technological advances will be achieved by around 2050 . . . Robots will be hugely attractive to humans as companions. . . . They will have the capacity to fall in love with humans and to make themselves romantically attractive and sexually desirable to humans. Robots will transform human notions of love and sexuality." How does the biblical theology of creation after its kind and two humans of opposite genders becoming one flesh address the current debates over what is acceptable to be termed "marriage," who is an appropriate sexual partner, and how we should define human personhood?

The following response to David Levy's vision of sexbots as standard furniture in the homes of the future will begin by reflecting on the image of God in humanity and its ultimate function as a didactic means to teach us to love someone other so that we can learn to love the One Great Wholly Other than us: the Triune God. Next, it will examine the effect of replacing God's didactic tool with a counterfeit: the misuse of manufactured artificially intelligent android counterparts. Noting the warnings in cautionary literature and film, we will examine the progress toward realizing such products today and end with a series of questions about their effect on the future of monogamous marriage as we highlight the biblical principles that should rule our consideration of the image of God in creation, personhood, appropriate sexual partners, and marriage.

## The Image of God in Humanity

What is the nature and significance of humanity, that the One who created it so values it and takes care of it? That is the question the poet king David asks in Psalm 8:4.

Evangelical Christians have always looked for the answer in Genesis 1:26–27, wherein the Triune God, discussing the creation of humanity, decides: "Let us (plural) make humanity (singular) in our (plural) image (*tselem*, a word used for representation, as of an idol), according to our (plural) likeness (*demuth*, that is, resemblance, model, shape, and, again, image), and let them (plural) rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the beasts, and over all of the land, and over all the moving things that move upon the land. And God (*'elohim*, the plural form) created the human (singular) in his (singular) image, in the image of God (*'elohim*), he (singular) created him (singular), male (singular) and female (singular), he (singular) created them (plural)."

Theologians over the centuries have speculated about the many possibilities for the meaning of the "image" and "likeness" of God and a wide variety of options have been put forth: humanity's essential power to reason, free will, original righteousness, the original state of purity, the blessing of rational, moral, spiritual fellowship with the Creator<sup>1</sup> and one another (our relational aspect), a unifying factor in human personality, the ability to rule and subdue the earth (which reflects how God rules and subdues the universe), moral responsibility, intelligence and humanity's innate knowledge of God, the talent to sub-create, and on and on.

1 This is the position of my colleague John Jefferson Davis in "Artificial Intelligence & the Christian Understanding of Personhood" in his book *The Frontiers of Science and Faith* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2002): "Humans are the image of God in view of a unique capacity for a personal relationship to God as the transcendent ground of their being... Christian theology need not, in principle, see as a fundamental threat to its view of the person the successful development of a computer that actually exceeds the human brain in computational power, that perhaps can feel or even replicate itself. Human uniqueness is to be found in the relationship with God, . . . the divinely grounded relationship is the fundamental basis of personhood" (108–10). He sees this relationship as a divine gift. He also has a helpful summary of various positions on the meaning of the image of God beginning on page 107.

For myself, I believe the answer is embedded in the language of Genesis 1:26–27, that the plurality/unity of the Godhead is reflected in the singularity/plurality of humanity. In other words, humanity mirrors corporeally a spiritual plurality/unity in God, what we recognize as the triune nature of God: the Trinity. We recall that God is spiritual, not material. Deuteronomy 4:15–16 warns that God is not to be depicted by means of any idol, either male or female, since God has no shape. What God is is spirit and the source of what translates in humans as male and female. Sexual attraction draws each gender to the other and men and women express our unity in the one flesh sexual union of marriage and all the dimensions that involves as noted in Genesis 2:24. But, God, as is true of the heavenly beings God has also created, does not marry nor is God given in marriage, as the hapless Israelites who attempted to marry God off to Athtarath discovered and Jesus continued to explain in Matthew 22:30 and Luke 20:34–36.

Since humans, however, reflect materially what God is spiritually, this singular/plural quality translates corporeally into two human beings—a male and a female—who make a whole. Some might speculate a child making a human trinity, reflective of the divine family, for example, God the Father as masculine, the Holy Spirit as feminine, Christ as the Child. But such anthropomorphism, assigning sex to God, in effect makes the incarnation result from the feminine Holy Spirit overshadowing the female Virgin Mary (see Luke 1:35)!<sup>2</sup> As we can see, such thinking errs in positing humanity as a kind of allegorical copy of the Godhead rather than an image. Interpretations, such as the Mormons', which see God as having a celestial male body, and male humans' earthly bodies being modeled on it (see Ether 3:15–16<sup>3</sup>), with celestial wives corresponding to earthly wives, a cosmology somewhat reflected from ancient Canaanite paganism through Sun Myung Moon's unification of Christianity with Eastern religion,<sup>4</sup> misinterpret the Bible's view. Biblical orthodoxy affirms that the God of Israel is one God (Deut 6:4), in perfect union, not three gods in perfect agreement. Two equal humans image that one God with three co-equal faces (*prosōpon*), or personalities, or, as the doctrine is historically phrased, in three co-equal Persons, thus humans do not simply copy God. There is nothing in our world that corresponds directly to the Triune nature of the Godhead—it is wholly other than us or our referents. So, we carry the image but not the direct copy of God. Colossians tells us only Jesus Christ, God Among Us in human flesh, could be the express image of the invisible God. As Athanasius, who crafted and defended the Nicæan Creed, laying down the rules of determining the orthodox understanding of Jesus Christ, insisted in his *De Synodis*, his critique of competing interpretations, only God can share substance (*ousios*) with God. We humans

2 Every anthropomorphic attempt to concretize the doctrine leads to heterodoxy: either Mary is reduced to a human surrogate for the divinely impregnated Holy Spirit, Jesus is somehow the result of a lesbian relationship of two female beings (one divine, one human), or, if the gender of the Holy Spirit is switched to male, the Holy Spirit becomes like Zeus, or a similar pagan deity, visiting earth to copulate with a mortal, being, in effect, Jesus' actual father, rather than the titular "God the Father." Perhaps one could speculate the feminine Holy Spirit carrying the Father's divine sperm and depositing it into Mary, but that kind of divine artificial insemination hardly seems the biblical model either. In the Bible, God as spirit is without sex or gender (as we noted God instructed Israel in Deut. 4:15–16). These properties belong to the natural realm. Instead, God creates Adam from the dust of the earth (Gen. 2:7) and Eve from the rib of Adam (Gen. 2:21–22). The "Let us" in Gen. 1, that we noted earlier, indicates the involvement of the entire Trinity. On the basis of this precedent, we can conclude the incarnation results from the work of the entire Trinity. The Trinity creates directly from the material in a human womb, as the same Spirit we saw brooding on the chemicals ("the waters") in Gen. 1:2 broods over ("overshadows" [*episkiazō*]) Mary, and the divine creative agent of the Trinity, the Word, becomes flesh (John 1:14), the "Second" Person of the Trinity entering into Mary's womb to be emptied of divine attributes like glory and omnipresence and become a human infant (Phil. 2:7), literally the human Son of God, while remaining God, drawing his identity from God the Father, the Creator from whom believers inherit the Kingdom of God, while making Mary, as the Definition of Chalcedon (a.d. 451) affirms, literally the "God-bearer" (*theotokos*), the human mother of the fully divine, fully human Jesus Christ.

3 In Ether 3:16, Jesus Christ, who in verse 14 states, "I am the Father and the Son," declares, "Behold, this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit" (Joseph Smith, Jun., trans., *The Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1968], 484).

4 "The Messiah will take his bride, and they will be blessed by God to form the restored first family of God as the restored first ancestors of mankind," an act which is necessary in his theology, since "the Fall was adultery . . . original sin was an act of adultery . . . the first crime was a sexual crime," The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, *The Divine Principle Study Guide* (Tarrytown, New York: Belvedere, 1967), 67, 78–79.

share substance with other humans. In the same way, animals share substance with animals. Adam discovered this point in the incubating garden, set aside like a nursery in the land of Eden, when he searched for a spouse among the animals and found nothing appropriate (Gen. 2:20). Like an adequate cause argument, the selection of a spouse, a partner, must be drawn from what is like one, so that procreation can be done, as God intended, after one's kind (Gen. 1:11–12, 21, 24). Birds produce birds; animals produce animals; humans produce humans. Even too much variation within similar species, for example a horse and a mule, produces sterility. The world God has created has the principle of adequate causality built into it. It was devised to produce order; chaos was controlled (Gen. 1), and such order, in terms of marriage and reproduction, does not easily lend itself to a return to chaos.

Further, the imaging of God in humanity is part of the didactic aspect that God has placed within our very beings. We humans are being taught about God's nature as singular yet plural by having two separate yet intrinsically related components, one drawn from the other (woman drawn from man), then having the other drawn from as well (man born from woman), so that we understand that separately neither is complete (see 1 Cor. 11:11–12). Both components, male and female, are needed to make up a whole humanity. By this didactic, ontological as well as epistemological tool, woven as it is into our very identities as Janus-like beings (that is to say, a humanity with two faces), we learn to need one another. And we also learn about otherness. By learning to love someone very other than ourselves, we learn to love God who is entirely other than ourselves.

This is why we evangelical Christians have traditionally eschewed extramarital sexual relationships and abhorred divorce as a kind of murder, the slaughter of the one flesh being created by our marital unity. We have also rejected same sex marriage as a narcissistic union of one's self to one's mirror image, not the union of the two separate components of humanity that, united together, express the whole. The reason for our strict sexual ethic, our insistence on celibacy outside of the male/female marriage bond, and the exclusiveness with which we regard and guard marriage is that we see reflected in our plurality yet unity in marriage the triune quality of the Godhead—plural yet in the perfect unity of love, not three gods in a divine ménage à trois, but one God with three perfect and co-equal faces, or personalities, or persons. In such an understanding of theology, we ourselves are, in our monogamous union, pedagogical types of the Godhead—breathing images, innately self-instructive. The lessons are nuanced as well:

- We recognize God is the source of maleness and femaleness and is reflected in both together. The Adam—humanity—is only complete when comprised of both genders, so the image of God is complete in our unity.
- Human sexuality is not only good, it is holy, reflective of a spiritual truth about the nature of God our creator, the One who is plural yet unified. This explains why marriage is a metaphor for fidelity to God in the Bible and adultery is a metaphor for apostasy.
- A truly holy marriage completes the image of God, but, at the same time, all of us male and female, whether single or married, reflect the personhood of God and together the entire believing community reflects the love of the Trinity. Single Christians reflect the oneness of God, not just the oneness of unity we also find in marriage, but the oneness of God that we affirm when we confess that we are monotheistic not tri-theistic in our dogma, while married Christians reflect the united communal plurality in the Godhead.
- The implications go beyond the theoretical, for they are practical as well. Both single and married Christians are essential in each church to reflect these two primal truths about God. Neither is more important, for we are confessedly monotheistic, worshipping one God but in divine community. In essence, then, we reflect the One who created us. Our relationships image the nature and relationships within that Creator.<sup>5</sup>

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5 Those who would like to read my further thoughts on marriage are warmly welcomed to explore our book, William

Since the beginning, as the descriptive curse in Genesis 3 reveals, the fall from perfection has attacked the relationship between male and female (what we call the war of the sexes), between humanity and the land and its animals (a war with nature), and between God and humanity (one front of the war in heaven). Fallen humanity remains at war with God. One way that rebellion is expressed is the substitution for what has been ordained for us by God with what we ourselves create in perverse imitation, perverse in the sense that enjoying the substitute serves simply our own pleasure and our sense of power in having been able to create it instead of inspiring appreciation to God for the gift that God has created and, as we enjoy that gift, teaching us more about God. So, pornography, the complete objectifying of another human into the single dimension of a sexual being existing solely for our pleasure, is about power and subjugation, not about appreciation to God. What should be good, the sexual expression of marital love, becomes perverted and ultimately destructive to us.

One of the places where the conflict and its effect—really its attack—locates today on the relational implications for the image of God in which we are made, and which remains an orienting factor within us, is in one of the most intriguing uses of our God-given ability to sub-create, that is, to take the materials with which God has constructed our material world and reorganize these materials into our cultural milieu: Perhaps, most dramatically, this conflict is emerging in our understanding of the development and the employment of artificial intelligence.

### The Uses and Misuses of Artificial Intelligence

That computers that help us think and do the tasks necessary to preserve us are useful to us as well as to our societies does not seem to me up to debate. They have become an intrinsic part of our lives and their role in technologically oriented societies only promises to increase to our benefit in health care, business, transportation, communication, etc.

How we regard these tools, however, has become an increasing matter of attention and concern. In a profound analysis of more than four hundred interviews with various users of computers, from small children to professional programmers, Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Sherry Turkle reports in her now classic study of computers and the human spirit, *The Second Self*, that she discovered the relational quality within humans—that Genesis 1–2 describes—made many of these human programmers, while fully aware that computers were not alive, nevertheless increasingly regard their machine as a companion not simply a tool.<sup>6</sup> In fact, she observes, “They went out of their way to ask questions in a form that they believed would provoke a lifelike response. People wanted to maintain the illusion that [the machine’s program] was able to respond to them.”<sup>7</sup> She concluded that “for adults and for children who play computer games, who use the computer for manipulating words, information, visual images, and especially for those who learn to program,

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and Aída Spencer, Steve and Celestia Tracy, *Marriage at the Crossroads: Couples in Conversation about Discipleship, Gender Roles, Decision Making and Intimacy* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009). In it we, along with Christian African American, Asian American, and Hispanic American couples, compare egalitarian and complementary views of marriage to identify what we have in common and from that perspective assess where we differ, in order to build a centrist and practical view of Christian marriage that cuts across the current camps.

6 Sherry Turkle, *The Second Self* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 38, 40.

7 Sherry Turkle, *The Second Self*, 40. Such an illusion will increase if inventor Stavros Antifakos is successful.

His intention is to replace instruction sheets with “a system of parts imbedded with microprocessors that tell the do-it-yourselfer” if he or she is putting together correctly furniture or other items that need assembly. Warnings are sent to one’s computer screen if one is connecting sections incorrectly. Eventually, he hopes to install “flashing lights.” Thus, even our lawn chairs may soon talk to us (*Coffee News*, vol. 2, no. 22E [June 19, 2009], 1, col. 2, accessible at [www.coffeenewsNSB.com](http://www.coffeenewsNSB.com)). James Bailey’s *After Thought: The Computer Challenge to Human Intelligence* (New York: Basic Books, 1996) uses organic, sexual language in describing computers as “breeding” and “interbreeding.” Such conceptions break down “the current distinction between program development and program utilization,” as computers are conceived of as linked “to share their genetic material universally.” The conceptual model is drawn from bacteriologists viewing “the whole global population of bacteria as a single superorganism evolving off a single corpus of genetic material.” Such description reinforces the illusion that computers are alive (206).



computers enter into the development of personality, of identity, and even of sexuality.”<sup>8</sup> This makes her ask “not what will the computer be like in the future, but instead, what will we be like? What kind of people are we becoming?”<sup>9</sup>

One radical answer to that question has been given in a most definitive way by chaired University of Reading (UK) cybernetics professor Kevin Warwick. As he notes on his Web site, on August 24, 1998, he had “a silicon chip transponder” implanted in his forearm. As a result, he could send a signal to a monitoring computer to turn on lights, open doors, operate computers in his office building. Four years later a one hundred microelectrode array was connected to nerves in his forearm, expanding his capability to manipulate appliances by remote and more importantly connecting him to the Internet<sup>10</sup> so that he “could therefore sense the world anywhere the Internet can take” him.<sup>11</sup> His wife also had a microelectrode implanted into her nervous system so they could communicate movement in their fingers to each other electronically. His “desire,” he explains, is “to be a Cyborg,” “a Cybernetic Organism, part human part machine.”<sup>12</sup> In his autobiography, *I, Cyborg*, he recalls being “dragged along by my parents” “usually” “to the Methodist church,” where he questioned “How do we know that God exists? and, Do we believe everything in the Bible?” realizing, “at the age of eleven . . . that there was only one way that I could believe in God, and that was if I had some proof. I never got any.” God seemed to him a god of the gaps that “people conjured up to fill the gap in their knowledge.” Though he concluded, “Jesus Christ . . . seems to have been a good person and most of the concepts of morality he raised I agree with wholeheartedly,”<sup>13</sup> he has now come to “seriously” question traditional “human morals, values and ethics.” His goal is to move beyond humanity’s “limited capabilities,” three dimensional perception, slow communication, and technologically “upgrade humans.”<sup>14</sup> His aim is also to keep humanity competitive and in charge of the advances in artificial intelligence: “because a computer cannot exactly simulate a human brain” would it “therefore be expected that computers will always remain subservient to us, no matter how far they advance with respect to speed, capacity and logical design”? That conclusion he regards “as pure Hollywood—simply what we wanted the ending to be. There is no reason whatsoever why computers will remain subservient to humans.”<sup>15</sup> Therefore, he warns readers:

Of course it doesn’t mean everyone has to become a cyborg. If you are happy with your state as a human then so be it, you can remain as you are. But be warned—just as we humans split from our chimpanzee cousins years ago, so cyborgs will split from humans. Those who remain as mere humans are likely to become a sub-species. They will, effectively, be the chimpanzees of the future.<sup>16</sup>

On his Web site, he adds, “In the years ahead we will witness machines with an intelligence more powerful than that of humans. This will mean that robots, not humans, make all the important decisions. It will be a robot dominated world with dire consequences for humankind. Is

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8 Sherry Turkle, *The Second Self*, 15. Another insightful and well researched book about the effect of computers and particularly the internet on children is Don Tapscott’s *Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation* (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 1998).

9 Sherry Turkle, *The Second Self*, 13.

10 <http://www.kevinwarwick.com/ICyborg.htm>, accessed 6/18/2009. A related benefit he notes is “the implant could carry all sorts of information about a person, from Access and Visa details to your National Insurance number, blood type, medical records etc. with the data being updated where necessary.” A recent example was reported in the case of Chachi, a missing Chihuahua returned to its owner when “a pet care center found the dog had an embedded microchip” with its owner’s “contact information,” Associated Press, “Dog back home in Fla. after being found in Ohio,” [http://enews.earthlink.net/article/str?guid=20090511/4a07a2c0\\_3ca6\\_1552620090511-1583610082](http://enews.earthlink.net/article/str?guid=20090511/4a07a2c0_3ca6_1552620090511-1583610082), accessed 5/12/ 2009.

11 Kevin Warwick, *I, Cyborg* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois, 2004), 264.

12 <http://www.kevinwarwick.com/ICyborg.htm>. In the wrong hands, as depicted in Kurt Vonnegut’s *The Sirens of Titan*, as well as in similar cautionary stories and films, the few use such manipulation to control the many.

13 Kevin Warwick, *I, Cyborg*, 8.

14 <http://www.kevinwarwick.com/ICyborg.htm>.

15 Kevin Warwick, *I, Cyborg*, 55–56.

16 Kevin Warwick, *I, Cyborg*, 4.

there an alternative way ahead?"<sup>17</sup> His answer to this question, and by extension to Sherry Turkle's, is to arrive at the "symbiotic state" of humans becoming cyborgs by the "interlinking of human and machine brains" and therefore achieving peace<sup>18</sup> with machines, though, at the same time, creating tension between cyborgs and those who remain mere humans, the latter becoming "slave-like labour" for the former, and in danger of being ignored and mistreated.<sup>19</sup> While procreation will still be practiced by the cyborg, "virtual sex" stimulated by brain "implant," he speculates, will be "very popular."<sup>20</sup>

The significance of Kevin Warwick's vision of a future mechanized humanity highlights the fact that no more profoundly can Sherry Turkle's question of what we are becoming be asked than in the areas of our sexuality and our relational qualities, as our societies redefine our view of marriage, and with it our view of adequate sexual partners, and also our view of ourselves as relational beings designed to become one flesh with another. Within the worldwide discussions of what constitutes an adequate and appropriate sexual partner (whether of the same sex, a minor in age or a close family member, a plurality of human partners, something of another species, that is an animal), recently an artificial intelligence expert, David Levy, in a 2007 book, *Love and Sex with Robots: The Evolution of Human-Robot Relationships*, posited:

Accepting that huge technological advances will be achieved by around 2050, my thesis is this: Robots will be hugely attractive to humans as companions because of their many talents, senses, and capabilities. They will have the capacity to fall in love with humans and to make themselves romantically attractive and sexually desirable to humans. Robots will transform human notions of love and sexuality. . . . Humans will fall in love with robots, humans will marry robots, and humans will have sex with robots, all as (what will be regarded as) "normal" extensions of our feelings of love and sexual desire for other humans. Love with robots will be as normal as love with other humans. . . . Love and sex with robots on a grand scale are inevitable.<sup>21</sup>

Such a vision in popular culture is actually not new at all. It is anticipated from the ancient myth of the sculptor god Pygmalion dressing up his living statue and calling her "his wife" and finally having it vivified by the goddess Venus<sup>22</sup> through Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), with the reanimated creature's demand for a spouse, on into so many of the contemporary dystopian tales of humanoids (creatures resembling humans), cyborgs (mechanized humans), and androids (robots with human characteristics). In film, as early as Fritz Lang's classic silent movie, 1927's *Metropolis*, a workers' resistance movement is depicted as destroyed by supplanting the young, female religious leader with a sexbot, that is, a robot designed to seduce, in this case to conquer by sexual means. Among the many accomplishments this wonderful, visionary, and cautionary film achieves is a chilling commentary on the dehumanization of women. As the sexbot reduces women to one dimension, so is the heroine captured and imprisoned in the film and her work is annulled. By inference, the film is arguing, if visual pornography dehumanizes women by reducing them to one aspect and objectifying that, what will three-dimensional pornography do—which is what a robot created primarily for sex is all about? This concern travels down through cautionary films to 1986's attack on what David Levy is envisioning, a sexbot for every house, in the movie *Cherry 2000*, wherein a hapless, socially challenged male protagonist hires a real woman tracker to help him find spare parts for his short-circuited sexbot and at the end is confronted with a challenge—will he

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17 <http://www.kevinwarwick.com/ICyborg.htm>.

18 Kevin Warwick, *I, Cyborg*, 295.

19 Kevin Warwick, *I, Cyborg*, 304.

20 Kevin Warwick, *I, Cyborg*, 302.

21 David Levy, *Love and Sex with Robots: The Evolution of Human-Robot Relationships* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 21–22.

22 Thomas Bulfinch, *The Age of Fable or Beauties of Mythology*, rev. J. Loughran Scott (Philadelphia, Pa: David McKay, 1898), 79–80.

choose reality or fantasy—a real woman or a simulated one? The choice of the simulation is made by women in the films *The Stepford Wives* and *Making Mr. Right*, while the tension of intentionally substituting a machine for a human family member is explored in Stanley Kubrick and Steven Spielberg's *AI*, and in the three Disney *Not Quite Human* films, wherein a robot seeks to simulate human expression in order to become human, a theme that is developed in 1985's *D.A.R.Y.L.*, when a scientist sacrifices his life for a robot, telling it it is a person. In the film adaptation of Isaac Asimov's 1976 short story *The Bicentennial Man*, a sexual dimension is introduced between robot and human that does not exist in the original short story. The robot petitions the government to be declared human after marrying the descendant of his first human owner (an illegal aspiration in another film: 1982's heart-rending *Blade Runner*, wherein "replicants" [adult androids, limited to a four-year existence] are given the capacity to develop emotions that aspire to a normal human lifespan, which they are not permitted by their construction to obtain).<sup>23</sup>

### Fiction Becomes Fact

All of these, of course, are speculative pieces of the science fiction or fantasy genre. But, how close to a reality are we in having robots in service in every private home? In his thoroughly researched book, David Levy notes that Mitsubishi currently markets a humanoid robot at \$14,300 (US) that house-sits while its owners are absent, cares for their sick, connects itself to the Internet and downloads email, encourages them "to visit the gym" for exercise, and has a 10,000-word Japanese vocabulary, recognizing ten human faces (173).<sup>24</sup> In 2003, about 400,000 domestic service robots were in use, but, according to a United Nations "prediction," that number hyper-spaced to about 4.1 million employed in homes in 2007 (297). Also worthy of note is that this past year in a Tokyo elementary school a "teacher" robot was actually tested.<sup>25</sup>

By 2010, Levy notes, Toyota hopes to market robots that can nurse the elderly and serve tea to visitors (7). Alexander and Elena Libin are a married couple whose company, Robotic Psychology and Rotherapy, based in Chevy Chase, Maryland, is studying the effect of "artificial partners" on those with psychological, emotional, or physical handicaps (9, 11, 115–17). In my own experience, recently visiting a parishioner suffering with dementia, I noted dolls being cradled like babies in the hands of senile patients. In addition, the therapeutic value of the presence of animals among Alzheimer's patients has been chronicled (101–02). Corresponding tests with computers with a

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23 A marked difference between the vision of attitudes on future earth in Isaac Asimov's many robot stories and these films I list is that, when "a girl robot" appears, as in his story "*Feminine Intuition*," the understanding of the human characters is, "Our robots are sexless, of course, and so will this one be. . . . If women start getting the notion that robots may look like women, I can tell you exactly the kind of perverse notions they'll get, and you'll *really* have hostility on their part. . . . No woman wants to feel replaceable by something with none of her faults" (9, 12). But, as the story ensues, men do respond to the robot's "beautiful contralto" voice, straightening their ties, combing their hair, so that her inventor observes, "They're all crazy about her now. All they needed was the voice. She isn't a robot any more; she's a girl!" (18). (This tale is collected in Isaac Asimov, *The Bicentennial Man and Other Stories* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976]). In Asimov's cosmology, on other "Spacer" worlds (planets colonized by humans), however, robots are "used as masturbation devices, perhaps, as a mechanical vibrator might be, but nothing much more," until a "new humaniform robot" is developed, promising that "human-robot sex [will] become widespread," a humaniform even marrying a human in his *The Robots of Dawn* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983], 143, 141). In the vision of films like George Lucas's *Star Wars* series and a recent Asimov film adaptation at this time of writing, *I, Robot* (2004), the 'droids have a distinct appearance. They are not simulated humans that cross over the line to become potential sexual objects or partners. The clone soldiers of the Empire and the workers in *I, Robot* are all identical. C3PO, despite his voice, is clearly a machine. This reminds us that robots are not evil creations that automatically must be banned ethically. Far from it. They are machines and can be of great help in innumerable ways. But, as machines, they are not animate life. They are not humans. Theirs is an "artificial intelligence." They are human creations. Asimov's Earth's view and the *Star Wars*' vision seem the more theologically correct ones in depicting their robots as distinct from human beings.

24 After this entry, page numbers in the text will refer to David Levy's *Love and Sex with Robots: The Evolution of Human-Robot Relationships* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), unless otherwise noted.

25 Peter Chianca, "That's Mr. Roboto to you," *North Shore Sunday*, March 15, 2009. Editor Chianca notes, "According to the Telegraph of London, the robot can 'carry out roll calls, set tasks and make facial expressions—including anger—thanks to 19 motors hidden behind her latex face'" (6).

simulated “caring” persona have also established their effectiveness in evoking positive feelings in humans (102–03). Corroboration was also noted in the affection transferred from real pets to virtual ones like Tamagotchi, the simulated pet created by a Japanese mother whose apartment was too small to allow her children to have a real pet. Between twelve and forty million were purchased worldwide, the largest single group of buyers being women in their twenties (91). Businesspeople were reported to have missed meetings and travelers to have canceled flights if the feeding schedule of their virtual pet was threatened (92). Israeli rabbis had to make a ruling whether to allow owners to care for their Tamagotchi on the Sabbath (93). When robotic counterparts, like Sony’s AIBO and the Furby, were introduced, the latter did sell 40 million (14). Clearly, affection for virtual and robotic pets was demonstrated, establishing the possibility that such affection could be evoked by robots that appear human and are endowed with human traits, speech, responses (127). Britain’s Marketing and Opinion Research International (MORI) survey has already determined that 16 percent of adults and 13 percent of children talk to their computers, 45 percent of children and 33 percent of adults considering it a “trusted friend” (70). David Levy posits carer robots may even replace Prozac with “live-in therapy, including sexual relations” (105).

Would such a development be an isolated phenomenon? Not if the cliché is true that pornography drives the net—that without it the Internet would never have developed to be much more than a few inventors exchanging notes. This reality fuels David Levy’s speculation that partner robots may become standard items whose prices may drop drastically enough to posit some in every home, proliferating like television sets. Eventually, sexbots may become so common as to end up in new and used stores similar to current compact disc shops that trade or sell used items, at thrift stores, antique stores for earlier and rare models, yard sales, though hopefully not church bazaars (although with the response of some churches in Massachusetts to weakening views on marriage, which is my context when writing, I would not consider that a foregone conclusion). Levy considers the appeal similar to that of the lucrative response enjoyed by the creators and marketers of sex dolls (an example of one was featured recently in the film *Lars and the Real Girl*, wherein a socially retarded young man transitioned to maturity through establishing a fantasy relationship with a sex doll, which he treated chastely as a real companion). RealDoll (by the appropriately named Abyss Creations), CyberOrgasMatrix, and SuperBabe are companies that design and market life-size anatomically correct female and male dolls. One designer claims he is steadily improving his product and will not be content until his doll is “better than the real thing” (243–45). The Japanese are at the forefront of such developments. The president of Japan’s Orient Industries dolls explains that his client base is comprised of older men whose wives have granted “permission” to them to buy dolls, mothers for handicapped sons, and many others with sex-related problems, such that his showroom resembles “a therapy area” (248–49). Discarded dolls are actually afforded Buddhist “funeral rituals” at a shrine, founded in 1631, “where the ‘souls’ of dolls are consecrated” (249–50). Though the practice of using dolls goes back to the ancient Greek world, a Japanese sex therapist concludes that its continuation today is such that some men, like the legendary Pygmalion, “have lost their desire for real women” who disappoint “their expectations” and are replacing them with fantasy models (251).<sup>26</sup>

In parallel to the financial success of sex dolls is the parallel appeal of virtual girlfriends, such as the cell phone software developed in 1994 by “Artificial Life,” based in Hong Kong. The purchaser must nurture the virtual woman with virtual candy, flowers, clothes, that David Levy points out cost “real money, not virtual dollars,” to be rewarded with conversation from her three-thousand-word vocabulary and the ability to maneuver her into sexual positions (96–97).

Today, research in Japan and elsewhere is attempting to fuse the technology in the virtual girlfriend with the three-dimensional aspect of the sex doll to animate the result as a sexbot (a fembot or malebot sexually oriented robot). The intention is reportedly to ease the brokenhearted with a

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26 “Pygmalionism” refers to the sexual use of statues of gods in temple prostitution (177).

companion programmed never to be capable of falling in love with another or to leave—with the added attraction of a backup memory disc that can be placed into a new unit in case of damage to the old. This speculated world envisions teenage pregnancies, abortions, pedophilia, and sexually transmitted diseases would all be diminished. In fact, it is posited human prostitution might end, robotic prostitution wiping out venereal disease, since a robot's genitals can be removed and disinfected after each use (300). Further, studies have shown that men who hire prostitutes or frequent “massage parlors,” while seeking sex without “complications,” still maintain a “myth of mutuality,” that the prostitute holds some kind of feeling or sense of companionship with him (204–06). One survey of 732 “johns” in five large North American cities concluded the “emotional meanings and overtones of a client's visit to a prostitute are more important to the client than the desire for sex” (206). One thinks of the age-old myth in popular literature of the “mistress with the heart of gold,” in such classics as Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*. Robots, it is argued, will not have to manufacture enthusiasm like the weary sex worker does, since enthusiasm will have been programmed into them at the factory, along with the appearance of a movie star, the intellect of a PhD, and the speech of a teenager on spring break, with all parts changeable for variety (208). Further, the Japanese, particularly, are working on “partner robots” that can express feelings of love or even lust and that can reprogram as they observe the responses of their owners (11–17). How will they do this? David Levy explains they will scan the human's brain and adapt accordingly (36–37). Even religious affiliation can be programmed in, as Levy notes: “Whether you're looking for an atheist, an occasional churchgoer, or a devout member of any religion, you have only to specify your wishes when placing your order at the robot shop” (138). Looking at the proliferation of Christian products, from greeting cards to cookbooks, is it so inconceivable to imagine a lonely woman ordering a simulation of her favorite televangelist for a home companion?

Japanese preoccupation with and affinity for creating such partner robots (and possibly the reason Japan has such flexibility in programming in any faith stance), Levy explains, is due to Shintoistic animism blurring the lines between “inanimate things” and “organic beings” (140).<sup>27</sup> In fact, as artificial hips, legs, arms, hearts, (eventually brains?) are increasingly developed and placed in humans, our uniqueness from machines becomes blurred as more humans become cyborgs, depending on mechanical devices to function (157–58), as we noted in the argument of Kevin Warwick. Further, Shintoism does not maintain the Judeo-Christian view of monogamy. Neither does Islam, Mormonism, African and other traditional religions, among other faiths even within our neighborhoods, as Christians across the world (and even increasingly in the United States) live in multinational communities where tolerance and acceptance of others' views are necessary for harmony in pluralistic settings. Monogamy, Levy suggests, may become socially “outmoded” and “inappropriate” (152). He cites a number of instances of changing attitudes in such areas as homosexual marriage and highlights an Alaskan judge who ruled the choice of “one's own life partner” as a “fundamental” right constitutionally, so, then, he asks, why not a robot (153)? It strikes me that Christianity may soon become one of the only viable institutions insisting on monogamous marriage to a human of the opposite sex.

### What Are We to Make of All This?

With a John Lennon-like touch, David Levy asks readers to imagine a world in the next few decades where robots are treated as “mental, social” and even “moral beings” (303). Though initially the objects of prejudice, they may win “a measure of moral standing” (305) and be regarded as “worthy of our affection, of our love,” marrying humans by the middle of this century (305) and

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27 Sherry Turkle reminds us of T. S. Eliot's warning about “dissociation of sensibility,” losing our “ability to integrate ‘states of mind and feeling,’” producing a “dichotomized view of human psychology”: “a shallow and sentimental way of thinking about ‘feelings’” and “mechanical views of mind,” fueled as well “by the more contemporary image of a generation taking the mix of mysticism, Zen, and romanticism that is the message of Yoda and the Force as what distinguishes the human in the world of the robots,” *The Second Self*, 63.



being championed by a roboethics that insists they be treated ethically and not abused or misused (305). He imagines mainstream women's magazines and other media taking their side (114). By 2010, beautiful fembots and handsome malebots will be winning the hearts of cultures (147).

These days conservative pastors may dread two homosexuals appearing and requesting to be married in one's church. What about someone showing up one Sunday morning with a mechanical spouse (sort of an animated version of the doll in *Lars and the Real Girl*) and asking that the sexbot be accepted into church membership, since it is legally the marriage partner? Obviously, besides humans, Christians do not consider other actual animate beings, for instance, animals, to have spirits (though, as we say, this may not hold in all other religions). As we noted, Genesis 1 tells us humans have been created uniquely in the image and likeness of God. But, a robot is not created by God, but by humans. So, it too is in the image of its creator: the image of humanity. Since it has not been created by God, it does not reflect God as its creator. It does not have the *imago Dei*. In fact, the idol regularly condemned by God in the Hebrew Bible is something humans construct by hand and endue with deeper significance. We center attention on it so that it replaces reality. An idol of an artificial deity replaces God and commandeers and diverts our worship. An "American Idol" may divert our own striving to accomplish with excellence and replace that with a vicarious fulfillment that ultimately leaves us empty of personally authentic achievement. A sexbot is an idol in that it replaces the divinely instituted sexual partner, a human of the gender opposite to ours, corresponding to oneself (*knegdwo*, "fit for one," Gen 2:18), with a constructed simulation that commandeers and diverts our attention, in this case our sexual energies, leaving us in a fantasy that also leaves another human - to whom we might have related in love—abandoned, ignored, and lonely. As with the creation of the neutron bomb, because we can do something, does not necessarily mean that we *should* do it. Ability does not necessarily entail moral mandate; capability need not demand production. If the resulting product destroys us, it may mean just the opposite.

In these terms, the issue may appear simple. The inappropriateness of a machine as a sexual object may seem obvious at this writing, but such clarity may rapidly disappear to those living within a media blitz where attractive computerized dolls are expressing feelings of love and lust (12), where, for example, the lonely are confronted by the productions of researcher Jong-Hwan Kim's "artificial chromosomes" (141), where DNA type structure allows robots to simulate "up to seventy-seven human behavior patterns" (20). When the "emotion module" being developed by Cynthia Breazeal's team at MIT and Juan Velasquez's Cathexis program (86) is in place, robots could conceivably marry not only humans, but each other as well. Prof. Kim notes, "They could have their own children" (142) by self-replicating, that is, building their own future replacements (which is already being done at Brandeis University, where robots are building robots [188 note]).

Such prototypes are already in existence. YouTube is filled with inventors' promotional videos of androids with female appearance, many attempting to garner attention (and perhaps donations) with titles like "fembot," "Sexy Robot That Can Sing," "Eva the female robot," "Sexy Robot Speaks—Sexy Robot Video," "Female Robot like a real human being," and on and on. Many of these appear to originate in Japan. Among the most impressive is Repliee Q1, a female android, powered by an air compressor, whose 31 sensors in its upper body allow it to "block an attempted slap," speak, "flutter" its "eyelids," even appear to breathe. Its inventor, Osaka University (Japan) Professor Hiroshi Ishiguro of the ATR Intelligent Robotics and Communication Laboratories, has also created Germinoid, a robotic replica of himself, with fifty sensors, giving it the ability to "shrug or scowl if prodded and poked," see, talk, and appear to breathe.<sup>28</sup> "At first, you may feel strange about the android," Prof. Ishiguro agrees. "However, once you are drawn into a conversation, you will forget every difference and feel totally comfortable to speak with it and look it in the eyes."<sup>29</sup>

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28 [http://news.nationalgeographic.com/new/2005/06/0610\\_050610\\_robot.html](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/new/2005/06/0610_050610_robot.html), accessed 6/23/ 2009.

29 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-450892/Scientist-unveils-doppelganger-robot...perf>, accessed 6/23/2009.

At the same time, responding to “spasms” experienced by his female android Repliee Q1 at the 2005 World Expo in Japan, he admitted, “When a robot looks too much like the real thing, it’s creepy.”<sup>30</sup>

Aiko (Japanese for “beloved one” and the name of a childhood friend) is the creation of Canadian inventor Le Trung, who explains on his website he was fascinated with anime (Japanese animated adventure films) as a child and, after viewing the film *Chobits*, “I decided I had to build a life size gynoid (robot designed to look like a human female).” The anime-inspired result actually bears to the present author’s eye a striking resemblance to the beautiful Hong Kong-based performer Lai Shiu Yan, whose hit song, “Everyone Has a Dream”<sup>31</sup> was popular circa 1990, when the inventor was fifteen years old. Aiko is intended to be much more than an anatomically correct animated doll. Explaining, “to make my robot human, she needed a name that would make people believe she exists,” his “dream” was “to have Aiko be as human-like as possible,” so that “the world” would “be able to connect with her human-likeness and at the same time not feel threatened by her technology.” While recognizing the “differences between robot and human” (e.g. having “feelings and emotions”), he notes: “I have tried my best to designing an artificial intelligence system which uses both dynamic software and hardware linked together to mimic part of human behavior. By using Bio Robot Artificial Intelligence Neural System (aka B.R.A.I.N.S) software together with a custom designed Humanoid (aka Aiko), we hope one day we will make an android as close to a human as possible.” As a result:

Aiko has the ability to talk and interact with human (13,000+ sentences). Aiko can read books, newspapers (print font size at least 12 pts). She has the ability to solve math problems displayed to her visually. Aiko has the ability to see color patterns on the clothes you are wearing. Aiko in theory has the ability to bring you your orange juice or coffee. In other words, Aiko can distinguish between the different drinks. She can also recognize simple foods such as Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, Sandwiches and even toys. Aiko has the ability to recognize the faces of family members or Aiko can be programmed to activate mode when it does not recognize the person’s face in the house such as in the case of an intruder. When you are about to go outside, Aiko can tell you to bring an umbrella if it is going to rain or wear warmer clothes if it is windy.<sup>32</sup>

Le Trung and his team work painstakingly on developing each facet of Aiko’s capability, such as a mechanical hand that can “feel physical sensation” and be manipulated by muscles, technology that can also “be beneficial for people born with or who have undergone amputations,” since “Aiko is the first android to react to physical stimuli and mimic pain.” Patents and donations have propelled this project’s development from a basement workplace/credit card beginning on August 15, 2007, to a major work now envisioning “future mass production of Aiko’s sisters.” Among the most popular questions received are constant queries about the gynoid’s sexual capabilities. Le Trung replies, “Aiko’s entire outer body is made of silicone. Sensors and motors are constructed underneath the silicone outer shell. Yes, Aiko has sensors in her body including her private parts (breasts and yes, even down there). AND NO, I do not sleep with her.” Beneath this statement, however, is a scantily clad cheesecake picture of this android lying prone on a sheet.<sup>33</sup> Fox News quotes Le Trung informing the Sun of London, “Aiko doesn’t need holidays, food or rest, and will work almost 24 hours a day. She is the perfect woman.”<sup>34</sup> Though this indicates his confidence that Aiko and its

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30 [http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2005/06/0610\\_050610\\_robot.html](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2005/06/0610_050610_robot.html).

31 Graciously translated for me by Scarlet Tsao.

32 <http://www.projectaiko.com/technology.html>, accessed 6/18/2009.

33 <http://www.projectaiko.com/>, accessed 6/18/2009.

34 Fox News, “Canadian Man Builds Himself Robot Girlfriend,” [www.foxnews.com/sotry/0,2933,465844,00.html](http://www.foxnews.com/sotry/0,2933,465844,00.html), accessed 12/11/2008. One highly controversial example is “Lisa,” the so-called “Perfect Woman,” claimed to have been developed by two Kobe University (Japan) robotics students in response to David Levy’s work. According to their Web site <http://www.perfect-woman.com/en/compagnie.php>, accessed 6/29/2009, one explains, “For me, everything started with a

software will have almost limitless possibilities, this perceptive inventor realizes, “But the one thing that I will never be able to give her is true emotion or a soul.”<sup>35</sup>

What I find to be among the most disturbing aspects of all these dreams is the prospect of the replacement of human relationships by sex without real love, since “love” has been programmed in. How can such artificial “love” empathize as we age but our partner never does? It cannot really comprehend the experience of increasing limitation. There is a certain comfort in someone assuring us, “I have had cancer too. I know what you are suffering.” “I once short-circuited” doesn’t quite reach us in the same way. There is also an iron-sharpens-iron quality in a real relationship that would be eliminated by a robot programmed to be always compliant. One could program in diversity of attitude, but would one? The narcissistic tendency in fallen humans would no doubt keep self-absorbed owners content to remain relational infants, daily affirmed by one’s robot partner as the never-selfish enabler of our own self-centrism. Even fidelity could be programmed into one’s sex robots so that David Levy envisions “multiple robot partners, with different physical characteristics and even different personalities,” and “their ‘jealousy’ parameters set to zero” (151). So, morality in marriages to robots could be programmed out. This is a bizarre kind of answer to the age old question of predestination versus free will. The former is assured.

How likely is this possibility? A 2003 survey by the Web site [www.BetterHumans.com](http://www.BetterHumans.com) had the greatest number of responders to the question of what one would expect from robots choosing “android love slaves” (289). That result suggests that people would prefer over a mechanical partner more a mechanical hooker, a kind of three-dimensional pornographic home appliance. Given the fact that by 2005 about 75,000 sexual gadgets were being marketed in the \$12 billion sex industry (257), the use of mechanical items in sex is apparently currently commonplace. The incorporation of much of this Haptic (that is, “touch”) technology into virtual reality modes, where partners miles apart can bring one another to orgasm, was recently demonstrated (267). This puts electronic trysts, or e-sex, into a whole new category that opens the door to all sorts of distance pairings between humans and, conceivably, robots. With the end result of marriage in the minds of many humans becoming obsolete, it would follow procreation would be largely farmed out to genetic laboratories and the nightmares of the anti-eugenics forces of the late 1800s and early 1900s might well be realized.<sup>36</sup> Joe Snell, in his article “Impacts of Robotic Sex,” envisions an “entire generation” of

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book called *Love + Sex with Robots: the Evolution of Human-Robot Relationships* by David Levy. I had always thought that one day technology would allow us to create a robot that would be able to perfectly imitate human behavior. With Lisa we succeeded.” The sales pitch on the “AI Robotics: Perfect Woman” promotional video reports, “The likeness to a human being is striking. She has been programmed to be, as the two creators tell us, the perfect woman.” What exactly is a “perfect woman”? One, the voiceover explains, who can give its owner an “hydraulic massage” or “cook them a delicious meal,” and the Web site text adds that can play chess, over 390 video games, some sports, shop, dress and recharge herself, sport an IQ of 130, being informed on many topics, while “even [being] able to satisfy your desires in the bedroom. For this we cooperated with a renowned sexologist whose expertise has been integrated with Lisa’s configuration.” An investor on the video claims, “We can satisfy a massive audience of males looking for their dream woman. Think about it. There are one hundred million single men in the world.” One inventor adds, “We tried to satisfy every man who couldn’t find the perfect woman, so she could love them and understand them, while taking care of the housework.” “She was been designed for all men who have not found their soul mate.” An outpouring of internet response on sites like “Dvice” claim Lisa must be a hoax, claiming to see “sweat” on the model and questioning whether a robot could maintain such equilibrium ([http://dvice.com/archives/2008/05/ai\\_robotics\\_hoa.php](http://dvice.com/archives/2008/05/ai_robotics_hoa.php)), accessed 6/29/2009. Eran Anderson also complained about the sweating and the site included responders who claimed to see her “larynx” and “sternocleidomastoid muscle” flex when she spoke, to notice her swaying “slightly side to side when she’s standing upright,” which a robot would not do, and (from Japan) a responder sending a friend to the location of “AI Robotics” and finding no building ([http://www.wix.com/?utm-campaign=walyou.com&experiment\\_id=Walyousdbar](http://www.wix.com/?utm-campaign=walyou.com&experiment_id=Walyousdbar), accessed 6/29/2009)). A year later, the Web site still elicits names for pre-orders but does not appear to have fulfilled its promise that the “Perfect Woman” would be forthcoming. Until this product appears, one may suspect this elaborate site is simply a gathering mechanism for niche email addresses. For our study, however, it lets us assess what many interested in an artificial companion would posit as the ideal woman: a compliant, live-in maid, who focuses on her owner’s desires and makes no demands.

35 <http://www.projectaiko.com/>, accessed 6/18/2009.

36 The danger of such a prospect has been well summarized recently in “Marriage and the Public Good: Ten Principles,” a report by The Witherspoon Institute in *Theology Matters*, vol. 15, no. 1 (May/June 2009): “Marriage is

“techno-virgins,” “never having had sex with other humans,” and seeing “robotic sex” as “‘better’ than human sex” (301).

Also programmed out would be sacrificial love, which is at the heart of Christianity as Jesus demonstrated and 1 John 4:16 testifies: “God is love.” As David Levy explains:

If you love someone enough, you will willingly undertake any risk, or knowingly sacrifice your own life, in order to save theirs . . . they are irreplaceable. But in the case of love for a robot, it will be as though death simply does not exist . . . there will never be any need for a human to sacrifice their own life for their robot or to take a major risk on its behalf (132).

Sacrifice will be deemed obsolete. The focus of a “relationship” will have shifted from mutual-ity, each partner looking out for the other, to a unilateral emphasis on what is good for one party alone. But, one might counter, we are, after all, talking about machines. Like, lawn mowers, dishwashers, snow blowers, power tools, and other labor-saving devices, machines exist for our use. A sexbot, however, differs from a power saw in that it simulates something greater—another human being. The impact on ourselves, the answer to Sherry Turkle’s question cited earlier, “What kind of people are we becoming?” determines the usefulness of creating such “tools.”

What I am asking is: What is the final fruit of creating an image of the opposite sex that can be programmed to obey one’s every whim?

Sherry Turkle has noted that the appeal of the computer is that it is an assistant over which we can maintain complete control. As she observes: “For adults as well as children, computers, reactive and interactive, offer companionship without the mutuality and complexity of a human relationship. They seduce because they provide a chance to be in complete control, but they can trap people into an infatuation with control, with building one’s own private world.”<sup>37</sup>

Does such complete control affect an owner’s self-identity by turning someone into a “small g” god who imagines a corresponding complete power over the referent to which that machine alludes: real human women or men? We notice even the real God does not demand this of us creatures. Throughout the Bible we see a give and take in process so that real people make real decisions that affect others and the world. But, if one has a sexbot in one’s home, what will happen to relationships with real spouses who are not slavishly obedient, but have their own opinions on life and their own convictions on what to do in it?

Further, what will be the impact on children of having a sexbot or several of them in the home in which one is reared? If a child is female, what will be the impact on the self-identity of a daughter growing up with one or more artificial, programmed-to-be-totally-obedient, always alluring and ready for coitus female sex slaves, engineered to be so-called “perfect women” in that they demand nothing? If the child is male, what will be the corresponding effect on his perspective on women,

also important in connecting children to their biological fathers and grounding their familial identities. Research by Yale psychiatrist Kyle Pruett suggests that children conceived by artificial reproductive technologies (ART) and reared without fathers have an unmet ‘hunger for an abiding paternal presence’; his research parallels findings from the literature on divorce and single-parenthood. Pruett’s work also suggests that children conceived by ART without known fathers have deep and disturbing questions about their biological and familial origins. These children do not know their fathers or their paternal kin, and they dislike living in a kind of biological and paternal limbo. By contrast, children who are reared by their married biological parents are more likely to have a secure sense of their own biological origins and familial identity” (6).

37 Sherry Turkle, *The Second Self*, 19. She refers to this as “a relationship to the machine that seems driven, almost evoking an image of addiction. . . . Reflection has given way to domination, ranking, testing, proving oneself. Metaphysics has given way to mastery.” She terms it “violent” (65). When her interviewees tried to describe their complete involvement with the machine, they would often do so in terms of “sex,” “sports,” or “meditation” (66). There is an “infatuation” she noticed (82): “Like Narcissus and his reflection, people who work with computers can easily fall in love with the worlds they have constructed or with their performances in the worlds created for them by others. Involvement with simulated worlds affects relationships with the real one” (82).

after being exposed since birth to such a simulation? If the sexbot is male, what will be a boy's self-image of the way men should comply obediently to someone's every whim?

And, then, there is the question of abuse. David Levy touches on one aspect of roboethics in noting concern for the ethical use of robots. In the film version of *Bicentennial Man*, a resentful child abuses the robot. We have noted that one argument for sexbots is that society will experience a decrease of rape and violence against women and pedophilia against both sexes since aggression can be expended on a machine. But behavior is learned. The old adage is that a child who breaks toys and mistreats pets will grow up to be a bully first and an abuser second. Habitual objectifying abuse of the interacting image of a woman, for example, easily extends to a pattern of behavior that responds similarly to the referent itself. Rather than reducing the instances of violence against women, I can easily conclude that the opposite will be the truth, because I observe that learned behavior becomes habitual behavior. Child pornography is outlawed precisely because pedophilia escalates with pornographic visual stimulation until, like any addiction, its victims need to heighten the dosage by, in this case, assaulting a real child. Why would practice on robotic children, on robotic women, not lead to acting out with the real referents? Will such developments that feed sexual addictions really make the world safer for women and children (and men as well)?

For a Christian, the focus in each preceding example has to do with the process of objectifying. Real sexual love, as God ordained it, is built upon the foundation of monogamous commitment with a single mature member of the opposite sex of one's "kind" (as the Jewish Publication Society of America's English translation of the Masoretic text renders the Hebrew *min* throughout Genesis 1): in this case an authentic member of the human species. Anything less is fornication or adultery. Sex without commitment—even if simulated—is sex devoid of the purpose God intended for it: that is, to express the one-flesh reality in the context of committed marital care. Sex in simulation separates love from commitment, which ultimately undermines authentic love relationships.

### What Can Be Done About All This?

Those of us who perceive the destruction of humanity and its bedrock institution of monogamous heterosexual marriage in such a future might wonder if prohibition through legislation is the answer. The disaster of Prohibition suggests otherwise. One simply alienates much of the population and hands the issue over to organized crime, which substitutes, in this case, robots for human prostitutes (300).

Our only real recourse appears to be to teach more intentionally and effectively the blessing of Christian monogamy. That ideal, as we have noted, is God's intention in the Scripture. The problems with maintaining this ideal have been obvious since Old Testament times when monogamous marriage broke down into polygamy (a sort of institutionalized precursor to today's "group marriage"). The Old Testament does not condemn polygamy regularly and specifically, but God's ideal of one-flesh heterosexual monogamy is still in place and is reaffirmed by Jesus our Lord (Mark 10:6–9). That principle, I believe, should dictate the way we approach the prospect of love and sex and marriage with robots.

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# Diet and Cross-Religious Witness

CRISTINA RICHIE

## Introduction

Each major world religion (Judaism; Islam; Hinduism; Buddhism)<sup>1</sup> as well as a variety of minor religions (Sikhs; Jains; Rastafarians; some Bahá'í; and some neo-pagans) have restrictions on the consumption of meat in the diets of adherents—that is, every major world religion except for Christianity.<sup>2</sup> Christian liberty is a hallmark of the faith, and thus there are no dietary restrictions. However, the goal of Christianity is not the liberty of the self, but the salvation of others through the spread of the Gospel. The great apostle Paul captured this sentiment when he wrote, “No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.” (1 Cor 10:24).<sup>3</sup>

Christianity is self-sacrificing for the sake of Christ rather than self-centered for one’s own freedom. In order to display empathy for others in different faiths, and as a major step in evangelism, I will explore the idea that Christians dwelling among people where other religions restrict their own consumption of meat relinquish their “right” to eat meat and adopt a modified or fully vegetarian diet. This applies to the Christian living in India as much as it does to the American in a multi-religious city. Christians who modify their diets have barriers to evangelism broken down and show compassion for those in other traditions.

This article will first overview the rationale behind modified vegetarianism in other religions by looking at the holy literature from each tradition.<sup>4</sup> This will deepen the Christian understanding of the significance behind abstaining from eating meat in the major world religions. Then the article will survey the biblical teachings on meat eating in Christianity. Brief narratives from Christian missionaries will be presented, and the article will conclude by advocating that both missionaries and laity ought to reconsider their eating habits so that “people from all nations” may come to Christ without undue obstacles.

## Meat-free in Other Religions

Most Christians have observed that other religions do not eat all the foods Christians do. Whether they are operating a kosher deli in New York or serving their families in Pakistan, non-Christians have certain dietary restrictions built into their religions for very serious moral and spiritual reasons, of which Christians are often unaware. In broad terms, Jews and Muslims abstain from certain meats for “cleanliness” reasons, while Buddhist and Hindus abstain from meat for “theological” reasons. This bifurcation, albeit simplified, will be helpful for the purpose of this article by identifying the similarities between the monotheistic, “Western” religions—Judaism and Islam—and non-monotheistic, “Eastern” religions—Hinduism and Buddhism, while also deepening appreciation for the more recent religions, Islam and Buddhism, which grew out of the more ancient traditions, Judaism and Hinduism, respectively. I will begin with Judaism, the foundation of Christianity and Islam.

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1 By denoting “major” and “minor” religions I am referring to number of adherents.

2 Some Christian denominations, such as Seventh-Day Adventists, are vegetarian, but most Christians worldwide generally agree that meat eating itself is not against Scripture. More and more, Christians are becoming vegetarian for ethical reasons such as the cruel situation of factory farming, the immense carbon emissions from cattle that are bred for food, and the rapid depletion of fish killed for human consumption. These concerns can be loosely traced back to Scripture. See Tripp York and Andy Alexis-Baker, eds., *A Faith Embracing All Creatures: Addressing Commonly Asked Questions about Christian Care for Animals* (Peaceable Kingdom Series) (Eugene: Cascade, 2012).

3 *Today’s New International Version* will be used throughout.

4 I refer to the corpus of writings in other traditions as “holy literature” to respect their own view of their writings. For the Christian, and especially for the Evangelical, the Bible alone and the Bible in its entirety is the inspired word of God. Yet I do want to take seriously the literature of other traditions in creating their own moral and religious teachings.

## I. Judaism and Kosher Foods

Our brothers and sisters from the Jewish faith, with whom Christians share more than half of the Bible, have many reasons from the Torah to reject consumption of certain meats. Harkening back to the beginning of creation, the first humans were total vegetarian, as indicated by Genesis 1:29-30:

Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move on the ground - everything that has the breath of life in it - I give every green plant for food."  
And it was so.

Humans from creation until the time of the flood were also vegetarian, but after the flood Yahweh permitted humans to eat meat. Genesis 9:3 says, "Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything." No sooner did Yahweh permit the killing of animals for food, than God set up regulations concerning their slaughter, commanding, "But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it" (Gen 9:4, cf. Lev 17:10). The simple rule of kosher killing was elaborated in later portions of the *Torah*, but the bulk of regulations concerning diet are included in the cleanliness code of Leviticus.

The book of Leviticus enumerates the ways in which the Israelites were to be holy and set apart for God. Dietary regulations were one way of separating their actions and habits from their pagan neighbors. Leviticus 11 sets the precedent for determining which animals are "clean" to eat and which ones are "unclean." This chapter in the Pentateuch effectively covers land animals (11:3-8, 26-31, 41-45), water creatures (11:9-12), flying birds (11:13-19), and flying insects (11:20-23). The book of Leviticus also gives guidelines for the killing of animals considered clean, such as Leviticus 17:10, "I will set my face against any Israelite or any foreigner residing among them who eats blood, and I will cut them off from their people." Clearly the early Jewish people learned that not all food was to be eaten.

The *mitzvah*, or commands, of God to keep dietary purity by not eating certain animals is recorded elsewhere in the Bible when Daniel clung to his religious belief as a captive in Babylon (Dan 1:8, 12) and refused to eat unclean meat. The loyalty of Daniel to abstain from eating non-kosher foods is still seen in the Jewish people who take the commands of God literally and do not eat certain meats. For the devout Jew, people who eat unclean meat are unclean themselves and acting as pagans do. As an act of closeness and obedience to God, avoiding foods such as pork and shellfish is mandatory. The continuity in dietary restrictions for the Jewish people confirms that they are acting within the will of God. The person who eats non-kosher food is surely not a chosen person of God.

## II. Islam and Halal Foods

In a similar vein, a Muslim will not eat certain meats because they are also considered unclean. To the devout Muslim, the *Qur'an* (or *Koran*) is the word of *Allah* (God) recorded through the prophet Muhammad. It contains rules for living and is as much of a holy book as the Bible is for Christians.<sup>5</sup> The *Qur'an* details what is *halal* (lawful) and what is *haram* (prohibited). Avoiding the meat of pigs is central for Muslims, just as it is for Jews.

In the sixth chapter of the *Qur'an*, entitled "The Cattle," forbidden food is that which is "already dead, or (has) blood, or (is) the meat of pig, for it is foul."<sup>6</sup> This command is also repeated

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5 Although with the rise of the Germanic biblical criticism of the late 1800's and the current distaste of those in industrialized countries for the authority of the Bible, one could argue that the *Qur'an* is held in higher regard by many Muslims than the Bible is by many Christians.

6 M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, trans., *Qur'an* (Oxford World's Classics) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 6:145.

in “The Cow” (2:173), “The Table” (5:3) and “The Bee” (16:115). This is similar to Jewish kosher laws, which is not surprising considering they are both Abrahamic faiths. That is, Islam traces its religious roots back to one true unitarian God, who has sent prophets to the people reminding them of their commitment to God. In addition to prohibitions on meat eating in Islam that stem from “cleanliness” motivations, there are also theological reasons for abstaining from some meat.

In a tone more similar to early Christian concerns, the second chapter of the *Qur'an* tells Muslims that they are not to eat “animals sacrificed to other than God.”<sup>7</sup> Idolatry was rampant in early Islamic society, so the return to monotheism and the separation from polytheism, which sacrificed animals to “gods” other than *Allah*, was necessary. The command to be set apart from the pagans, once again, informed regulations regarding meat eating. Meat sacrificed to idols was considered idolatry for a people who were seeking to submit (the meaning of the Arabic word “*islam*”) to *Allah*, therefore devout Muslims avoided certain animal flesh.

The restriction of certain meats is just one aspect of this multi-faceted religion that regulates clothing and rituals of its adherents. Islam as a religion is preoccupied with purity, and commands given in the *Qur'an* against eating certain types of meats are rigorously maintained. People who eat *haram* meat are repulsive to the Muslim, as they are eating the flesh of filthy animals. This is a clear violation of the will of *Allah*, and Muslims have diligently set up *halal* markets to separate themselves from idolaters who eat pork. There can be no fellowship at a table that dines with swine.

For both the Jew and the Muslim, who trace their faith back to a belief in one God, meat with blood still in it is also unacceptable for consumption. The cultural and religious entrenchment of such regulations is a staple of their traditions and a part of their identities. Each person’s worldview informs the way they see others. For both Jew and Muslim, those who are not kosher or *halal* are unclean. Growing up in a religion where certain meats are unclean influences how one views forbidden meat eating and those who consume it. Christians, if they consume pork products, are rejected as unclean and, moreover, clearly outside of the will of God to Jews and Muslims.

### III. Hinduism and Ahinsa

On the other side of dietary regulation are Hindus and Buddhists who refrain from eating meat for philosophical or theological reasons. In general, they prohibit meat not because it is ritually “unclean,” but because it is theologically unacceptable to kill a sentient being for various reasons. Both Buddhism and Hinduism believe in *samsara*- the transmigration of the soul. Each creature, including each human, is reborn after it dies. Therefore, an animal may well have been a human at another time. Furthermore, Buddhists and Hindus recognize that animals that are killed for food feel pain and thus inflicting harm on them by killing them causes negative *karma* (the moral merit of one’s deeds) to accrue, thus making it more difficult to escape the cycle of life-death-rebirth.<sup>8</sup>

Since Buddhism grew out of Hinduism, it makes sense that some of the historical traditions would be similar. Both of these religions demand high compassion for all creatures, considering that all beings are connected in this world and the next. Therefore, the Hindu and the Buddhist are warned against taking the life of an animal, lest they hinder their goal of a desirable afterlife.

Hinduism is essentially a works religion. One must act in accordance with certain principles, make offerings (*puja*) to gods, and perform other ceremonial acts to enhance one’s position on the wheel of *samsara*. One of the doctrines that can and should be observed as a Hindu is *ahinsa*, or non-violence. Non-violence in the Hindu scriptures are twofold: the first speaks against the killing of any living thing; the second speaks against the slaughter of animals specifically. I will focus on the latter for the purposes of this article.

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<sup>7</sup> Haleem, *Qur'an*, 2:173.

<sup>8</sup> In Hinduism the cow has additional reverence given to her, therefore prohibitions against eating cows are the strongest. Ascetic Hindu- monks and priests- are strict vegetarians even though many “lay” Hindus will eat other animals like chicken.

One of the books that the Hindus consider authoritative, the *Tirukural*, says, “What is the good way? It is the path that reflects on how it may avoid killing any creature.”<sup>9</sup> One can circumvent slaying beasts through adopting a vegetarian diet that does not include eating any animal flesh. The path of goodness and concern for an ethical life comes when all life—human and animal—is maintained. Killing is violent, but maintaining sentient life is non-violent.

Another Hindu passage states, “Virtuous conduct is never destroying life, for killing leads to every other sin.”<sup>10</sup> If one is willing to destroy the life of another being, which can feel pain, and is a creature on the earth along with humans, what would stop that person from committing other, possibly greater, harms? Life, even the life of an animal, is to be preserved and not destroyed. Hindus avoid meat for these reasons and look down upon those who kill other creatures—Hindu or not.

The benevolence of Hindu philosophy may also be expressed with another saying from the same book: “Goodness is never one with the minds of these two: one who wields a weapon and one who feasts on a creature’s flesh.”<sup>11</sup> Of course, one would have to use a weapon to kill an animal, but this counsel goes beyond just the act of killing an animal by also discouraging the act of harm against a human. The Hindu devotion to pacifism is impressive, and the notion of vegetarianism is promoted both through lauding the virtues of a peaceful life, “the good way,” and also through shunning those who follow a cruel path. People who kill animals are acting with *hinsa*, or violence, and hinder their path to the ultimate spiritual liberation.

While fully acknowledging the desire to eat meat is a part of human inclination, the *Mahabharat* nevertheless states, “He who desires to augment his own flesh by eating the flesh of other creatures lives in misery in whatever species he may take.”<sup>12</sup> The symbiotic nature of creatures and humans, the cycle of life, and the belief in reincarnation form a strong web of beliefs for the Hindu. The highest ideals of liberation include compassion for other creatures since one cannot anticipate with certainty if they might enter the body of an animal upon reincarnation. Therefore, they do well to avoid any animal flesh.

As Hindus believe they are on the path to liberation and are bound by the laws of *karma*, they attempt to avoid meat, violence, and killing. These three are always linked. As a corollary to the Hindu view of animal consumption, we might also take a brief look at Sikhism, noting the similarities.

The Sikh religion, which originated in India, is a mixture of Islam and Hinduism beliefs and rituals. Adherents are monotheistic (as in Islam) but believe in reincarnation (as in Hinduism). All Sikhs maintain totally meat-free diets, tracing back to the Hindu caste system and the division of contaminated labor, in other words, those who handled corpses. In Sikhism, as Eleanor Nesbitt notes, “the abhorrence of bodily reality was institutionalized. Meat-eating was likewise condemned as incompatible with spiritual advancement.”<sup>13</sup> For both the “lay” Sikh and the spiritual leader—the Guru—vegetarianism was the superior lifestyle. A plant-based diet indicated that one was separate from the appalling task of handling decaying flesh. Furthermore, it was “unthinkable that so holy a person as the Guru could have eaten flesh”<sup>14</sup> and, therefore, in the pursuit of religious goals, meat was relinquished. All people wanted to walk closer to their god and be pure. The killing of animals and consumption of their dead bodies could not have been compatible with a walk with god.

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9 Satguru Subramuniyaswami, trans., *Tirukural* (Hauz Khas, New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 2000), ch. 33.

10 Subramuniyaswami, *Tirukural*, 312, 321.

11 Subramuniyaswami, *Tirukural*, 253.

12 Romesh Dutt, trans., *Mahabharat* (Minneapolis: Fili-Quarian Classics, 2010), 115.47.

13 Eleanor Nesbitt, “The Body in Sikh Tradition,” in *Religion and the Body*, ed., Sarah Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 289-305, at 293.

14 Nesbitt, “The Body in Sikh Tradition,” 299.

#### IV. Buddhism and Ahinsa

Much like the Hindu philosophy of non-violence, Buddhism also prohibits the killing of animals. In the Buddhist tradition, there is not a personal God who determines salvation at the end of life. Rather the path to *Nirvana*—the extinction of worldly desires—is undertaken alone, under the power of one’s own will. Even so, spiritual guidance is found in the Four Noble Truths and Eight-Fold Path, recorded in the *Sutras*. Many of the *Sutras* contain the words and deeds of Siddhartha Gautama— the first person to become enlightened. Also known as “the Buddha” (the Enlightened One), Siddhartha Gautama taught non-violence, among other teachings.

The *Siksha-Samuccaya*, a compendium of Buddhist teachings, gives specific reasons why the eating of meat is reprehensible, the primary of which is found in the section “On Not Eating Meat.” Consumption of animal flesh “hinders deliverance and righteousness.”<sup>15</sup> Since the goal of Buddhism is to extinguish *dukkha* (suffering), one cannot inflict physical pain on another being. Right actions are thought to lead to *Nirvana* but violence, meat eating, and even professions like butchers are not within acceptable practices for Buddhists on their way to spiritual extinction. There are also additional reasons for Buddhist vegetarianism.

Other texts, like the *Lankavatara Sutra*, forbid the eating of meat because it is “wrong” and “improper.”<sup>16</sup> Spiritually, the text prohibits killing and consuming animals because it is evil in this life and also punishable by hell in the next life. The book declares, “He [sic] that eats flesh is in transgression of the words of a sage, the man [sic] of evil mind... those sinners go to the most awful hell.” Much as in Hinduism, earthly actions (*karma*) of Buddhists have post-mortem consequences. The perpetual cycle of life means that deeds done on earth must be accounted for after death. Concern for both the well-being of creatures and the degree of devotion to attaining *Nirvana* are taken into consideration when prohibitions against meat eating are given.

The Buddhist who disregards these teachings on non-violence is assumed to be misguided on their path to liberation. In the section “On Not Eating Meat,” the *Siksha-Samuccaya* warns, “as passion would be an obstacle to deliverance, so would be such things as flesh.”<sup>17</sup> Tradition holds that eating meat fuels sexual and appetitive passions. These cause desire and are a distraction to the spiritual path. In fact, so convinced is the *Siksha-Samuccaya* that abstaining from meat is a universal principle for salvation, it includes all “religious people” in the ranks of those who testify that eating meat is detrimental to spiritual life. The text reads, “By Buddhas and by Bodhisattvas and by religious persons it has been reprehended; if one eats it, he is always born shameless and mad.”<sup>18</sup> For the Buddhist, life in the high pursuit of truth and liberation cannot include the killing of animals. Therefore, to the devout Buddhist, meat eaters are unscrupulous and certainly not spiritually minded.

Hindus and Buddhists do not depend on a god for their afterlife; they must act in accordance with principles that they believe will lead them to their ultimate goal. For Hindus, liberation through *moksha*, or getting off the wheel of reincarnation in order to merge with the Divine is necessary. For Buddhist liberation is also found through *moksha*, but with the spiritual extinction of self in *Nirvana*. In both cases, the law of *karma* influences the position in the afterlife. Killing animals invites deleterious *karma*. However, living a life of non-violence, non-meat eating, and commitment to *ahinsa* brings a better position in the afterlife. The person who eats meat in these religions—even the religious person of another faith—is a stumbling block to liberation and acting contrary to “laws” which are central to the religion.

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15 Cecili Bendall and William Henry Denham Rouse, trans., *Siksha-Samuccaya* (London: John Murray, 1922), 131.

16 Red Pine, trans., *The Lankavatara Sutra: Translation and Commentary* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2012), 6.22-23.

17 Bendall and Rouse, *Siksha-Samuccaya*, 131.

18 Ibid.



## Meat in Christianity

It is clear that Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism teach that eating all meat, or certain types of meat are not within the realm of acceptable religious practice. It is therefore surprising, to the observer outside of Christianity, that Christ-followers may eat any food—animal meat or otherwise—of their choosing.

In bold contrast to the other religions of laws or codes, Christianity relies on freedom and grace instead of law. Christianity traces its origins to Judaism, as Jesus and the disciples were observant Jews who followed kosher laws and ritual holidays such as Passover. Yet, Jesus' radical teachings on cleanliness being spiritual and not physical opened the doors for Christian liberty in diet and other matters. Through a reinterpretation of the Jewish cleanliness codes, emphasis was put on the inner disposition of the heart instead of the outer actions of the body.

When Jesus of Nazareth came as the Messiah, the Old Covenant was fulfilled (Matt 5:17) and the New Covenant began. Under the reign of Christ, human salvation was no longer contingent on external rules and practices such as ritual purity that included dietary restriction or ritual sacrifices that killed animals (Mark 7:19-23). Rather, the salvation of humans was based on faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior (John 3:16) and trust that he mediates on behalf of humans (Heb 5:10). The liberty, which Jesus Christ brought, included what Christians may with good conscience eat, and therefore all foods became objectively “clean.” Even so, not all food was always considered to be available to Christians theologically. Especially in early Christianity, when kosher Jews were converting to the new faith, dietary restrictions were a contested issue.

### *I. Food in the Acts of the Apostles*

The first of the Jewish apostles to understand that all food, and, therefore, all people were clean was Peter. In Acts 10, Peter was praying on a roof, hungry. He went into a trance (10:9-10) and saw a large sheet containing “all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds” (10:12). What happened next was even more startling than the vision, for “a voice told him, ‘Get up, Peter. Kill and eat’ ” (10:13). Peter, being a faithful and kosher Jew, replied, “Surely not, Lord!” (10:14). He would not eat the animals that were forbidden to devout Jews. Yet, God spoke to him again through the vision saying, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean” (10:15). As Peter processed the vision, he concluded that God made more than just the meat of animals clean. He made Gentiles clean as well. For this reason, when Peter explains the vision he had to the others, he declares, “God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean” (Acts 10:28). The vision was a heuristic (learning) tool for the Jewish disciples who would bring the Gospel to Gentiles and pagans. It seems that the vision was interpreted in part literally from the beginning of the early church, since the very first council of the Christian church—the council of Jerusalem in Acts 15—retained kosher injunctions.

One of the next episodes recorded in Acts laid the foundation for the next phase in the early church: the reconsideration of the Levitical code of cleanliness. In Acts 15, Christians rejected the compendium of cleanliness laws, but also sought to institute some guidelines for early Christians. Without wanting to be too burdensome, they decided that Gentile Christians were to “abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality” (Acts 15:29). These prohibitions facilitate the greatest Christian liberty.

Jews, as well as pagan converts to Christianity who followed Jesus, were grappling with issues of tolerance, multiculturalism, and pluralism in their day; there are many similarities to today. Even after the council of Jerusalem, the church still had questions about dietary choice and sexual morality. These issues were explained in Paul's epistles.

Still seeking guidance in their new home-churches, early Christian leaders wrote to the apostle Paul, who responded in his epistles to various churches. Paul took up the issue of diet (among other

issues) in 1 Corinthians and concluded that even though Christians can accept all food as clean, it does not follow that all meat should be eaten, because there is a law that is higher than liberty, and that law is love (see John 13:34-35).

## II. Paul's Texts on Food

In 1 Corinthians 10:23, Paul summarizes the theology of Christian liberty. He writes, “‘I have the right to do anything,’ you say—but not everything is beneficial. ‘I have the right to do anything’—but not everything is constructive.” This proverb comes after Paul’s elaborations on food sacrifices to idols (ch. 8) and precedes his example of Christian conscientiousness (ch. 10).

1 Corinthians 8 describes the conundrum that many Christians were facing: could one eat meat sacrificed to pagan idols? Diving into the issue at hand, the apostle concludes that, with matters of liberty in consumption of foods, “if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall.” (1 Cor 8:13). That is, even though one person may feel like it is theologically acceptable to eat certain types of food, if another person does not, then it is better that the “stronger” of the two cater to the “weaker” person and meet them where they are.

Applied to the mission field, it seems that Paul agrees that what Christians eat does not make them more or less holy, but, if what we eat causes disdain from non-Christians, or even contempt from Christians who have modified their diet to accommodate the “weak” principles of other religions, then we should be willing to go our whole lives never putting a morsel of “contemptible” food in our mouths. Paul urges the Christians that, if they desire the salvation of all people, they should relinquish their rights in order to become more appealing to the culture they are in.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, making an effort to integrate into a culture or situation is the next part of Paul’s argument.

In the next chapter, Paul writes, “I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some” (1 Cor 9:22). While adamantly defending the rights of an apostle and servant of Christ, and vigorously asserting that he answers to no one but Christ, Paul voluntarily abdicates his rights, privileges, and freedom in order to reach nonbelievers. As Christians, we have every right to eat that which we believe is acceptable to eat, but, as witnesses to the Kingdom, we may surrender our right so that others may be attracted to Christ. Though freedom came with salvation, the debt of love is never paid off (Rom 13:8).

Paul continues in his epistle with an example of a person trying to share the Gospel (1 Cor 10:26-30). The individual in this scenario is essentially a missionary—a Christian in a non-Christian setting—living in a culture where some people feel compelled to have dietary restrictions of not eating certain meat. In support of Christian freedom, the apostle quotes Psalm 24:1, “The earth is the LORD’s and everything in it” (1 Cor 10:26). But, in refutation, Paul counters, “But if someone says to you, ‘This has been offered in sacrifice,’ then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience (1 Cor 10:28). Paul clarifies the phrase “conscience’s sake” by adding, “I am referring to the other person’s conscience, not yours. For why is my freedom being judged by another’s conscience?” (10:29). In other words, Paul would say in Jewish or Islamic terms, “Why should I avoid the meat of certain animals if I know that all animals are kosher and *halal* for me to eat?” and of Hindu or Buddhist precepts, “Why should I give up meat if I don’t think that I have to live by the rule of *ahimsa*?”

Paul answers his own question from verse 29. In a gesture of *agape* love, Paul pronounces that he will indeed let “his freedom be judged by another’s conscience,” because he does not want to “cause anyone to stumble” (1 Cor 10:32). Paul would rather adapt his eating habits to the customs

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<sup>19</sup> It is important to note here that we are not dealing with Christians vacillating over a *moral* issue. It should never be suggested that if a culture practiced child sacrifice or some other abomination that Christians should follow along. The issue of eating flesh from animals is premoral—that is, void of either positive or negative morality in and of itself. It gets its morality from the context and situation that the food is presented in.

of the non-Christian culture he is in rather than have a potential believer be repulsed by him and his dietary habits, and, therefore, the faith. The apostle's example to Christians desiring the salvation of others is precisely what missionaries must be willing to emulate in refraining from the meats that are forbidden in other religions. Christians abstain not because we believe that these foods are unclean or violent, but *for the sake of others* because "no one should seek their own good, but the good of others" (1 Cor 10:24). Christian love trumps Christian liberty. This is among "the greatest commandments" (Matt 22:37-40).

### Experiences from the Mission Field

Some missionaries have already discovered the evangelistic benefits of switching to a meat-free diet while witnessing in cultures that do not permit meat eating. Others have found that they had to modify their already vegetarian lifestyle to accommodate others who felt their hospitality offended when these missionaries refused animal flesh. Context is key, and, even though these stories come from missionaries abroad, I believe that modifying one's diet to fit the culture applies as much to the American in a multi-cultural city as it does to a missionary in a country overseas.

#### *I. From Carnivore to Herbivore in Hindu India*

One woman who works in India pointed out that to me "all the Christians (she knows in her area of India) eat meat," which puts her, as a vegetarian witnessing to Hindus and Muslims, in an "awkward position."<sup>20</sup> Some Christians, having the "right" to eat meat, feel it is their obligation to eat meat so as to distinguish themselves from Hindus and Muslims. But missionary work is not merely about presenting Christianity as distinct from Hinduism or Islam. Rather, laying a common ground in order to expedite future fellowship and possible conversion is also a missional objective.

My colleague serving in the Indian culture says that her vegetarianism makes her more relatable to the Hindus and Muslims, but when she is staying with other Christians they expect her to eat meat. This presents a conflict of interest for her and sets up a false dichotomy of what is expected of Christians. While Christians may choose to eat meat, when practices of hospitality and meal-sharing are a means of witness, one does not want to risk offending the person to whom they are witnessing by serving food that is prohibited. Of course, it is not always the situation that Christians are witnessing in a vegetarian-oriented culture, especially when Protestants go into Catholic countries.<sup>21</sup>

#### *II. From Herbivore to Carnivore in Catholic Paraguay*

Missionaries in South America, for instance, have pointed out that, because the continent is predominantly Catholic, it can be offensive or rude not to eat meat that is being served by a host family of a different denomination. Indeed, another missionary to Paraguay *stopped* being a vegetarian in order to fit in better with the culture. She says that she started eating meat because it "helped the people to tangibly see that I was not rejecting an important staple in their diet and culture."<sup>22</sup> The point here, then, is not that all Christians must adopt *halal* or *ahinsa* eating habits, but that their love of neighbor is considered first when they make cultural choices as ambassadors of Christ.

Beyond those witnessing to believers in the major religions of Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, there are a growing number of non-Christian, non-religious vegetarians that Christians associate with. In many industrialized countries, non-religious environmental scientists, animal-rights groups, and those concerned with healthy eating are turning away from meat.<sup>23</sup> These people

20 Personal communication, September 06, 2009.

21 Many Christians regard all Christian branches—Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant—as equally accessing Christian salvation if they adhere to salvation through the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ and Lord and Savior, but other organizations do send Protestants to Catholic countries. Therefore, I relay this anecdote not as a judgment that Catholics need to be "saved," but rather as a reality that some Christians are sent to witness to other Christians.

22 Personal communication, September 13, 2009.

23 Atheist ethicist Peter Singer is perhaps the best known of these vegetarian leaders. His book *Animal Liberation* (New York: HarperCollins, 1975) spurred modern awareness of the conditions of animals raised for slaughter, among other issues important to those who care for animals.

perceive Christians who eat meat as detrimental to the environment, cruel to animals, and hastening the demise of their body. They are offended that a Christian who preaches stewardship could harm the environment through consuming factory farmed cows that are a huge contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. They are appalled that a Christian who adheres to love and non-violence could kill a sentient chicken or sheep. And they are put off that Christians who claim that our physical bodies are the “temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 6:19) would consume animal products that lead to heart disease, contribute to obesity, and are highly processed.

In contrast, when non-religious vegetarians meet a vegetarian Christian, they are shocked into conversation; this can lead to friendship and conversion.<sup>24</sup> When Christians relinquish their liberties to meat eating, and witness to those with no religious affiliation, they are afforded more respect and doors of communication are opened. Sacrificial love puts one’s own desires below those of a sister or brother in need. The heart of missions is love of other. Part of the cultural adaptation which many missionaries make include modifying styles of dress, language, and foregoing the luxuries of modernity. Diet should be the same way.

Does this mean that, once a convert is made, one might switch one’s diet back to meat eating (or vegetarianism, depending on the context)? I would say not. Our work is never done while on earth, and I would consider that, as one moves through the pluralistic, interconnected world, that maintaining a vegetarian diet will act as a tremendous witness to the majority of people who are not Christians.

### Conclusion: “All Things to All People?”

Jesus adapted to a culture he was ministering in order to reach unbelievers. Through parables about common people, plants, and animals, Jesus constructed lessons that could be understood. When Jesus performed miracles, he often employed the elements of his surroundings—bread and fish from a child; mud from the ground. The amenability of Jesus illuminates the path for missionaries who also want to be beacons of light to those who are in the darkness.

The conclusion of Jesus’ time on earth was invested in training disciples—female and male to spread the Good News of salvation and freedom to the ends of the earth (Matt 28:19). Christians are reaching an exciting time in missions where translations of the Bible are being made into dialects that have never seen the Word of God. The 10-40 window<sup>25</sup> is targeted and systematically being penetrated by devout followers of Christ who burn to spread the Gospel to non-Christians. It would be folly to make such an impediment to the Gospel as the eating of meat by the missionaries who go to serve these regions.

Food is of the utmost primacy to life—one cannot live long without eating. Food is the language and expression of cultural and religious significance. Food is a common bond among all humans. Christians are at liberty to eat whatever they feel is “permissible” for them—that is part of their freedom in Christ. But, for the sake of our non-Christian brothers and sisters, let us become “all things to all people” for the glory of God and enter into a meat-free life while we witness to those who do not eat meat.

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24 I speak here from my own experience as a vegetarian of over 20 years living in California, Seattle, Colorado and Boston. Each of these cities have non-religious vegetarian communities that rarely hear the Gospel. Meeting a Christian who does not eat meat gives a point of contact that makes the Christian life appealing. We cannot underestimate this way of presenting Christ.

25 The area on the map within 10-40 degrees latitude which has the most non-Christians out of any other area in the world.

## Review of *How to Succeed in Hollywood (Without Losing Your Soul): A Fieldguide for Christian Screenwriters, Actors, Producers, Directors, and More* by Ted Baehr (Washington, D.C.: WorldNetDaily, 2011)

William David Spencer

Keying off his experiences working in the film industry, guitar virtuoso and veteran sound track composer Ry Cooder, in his song “Down in Hollywood,” once warned unsuspecting travelers to gas up and drive swiftly through the tinselled city, because on every corner its lurking predators are waiting to seize passersby, yank them out of their safety zones, and kick them around their mean streets.

The warning also applies to all of us worldwide, since everyone with technology is exposed to the gargantuan reach of the entertainment industry and its power to shape public opinion through the means of the net. In my travels, I have noticed the whole world is “star struck,” from the Michael Jackson ephemera store I discovered on the street of Athens to the thriving markets of Disney bootlegs I came across in Havana during one of the windows of U.S. travel there. But no matter which end of the camera readers are interested in, their attraction and its ramifications are thoroughly explored in this thorough and thought-provoking study by deeply respected Hollywood insider Ted Baehr, creator and driving force behind the *Movieguide*, the filmdom “bible” that guides public opinion.

His book, subtitled “A Fieldguide for Christian Screenwriters, Actors, Producers, Directors, and More...” contains an enormous amount of information in its fourteen chapters. It is much like an army survival manual. A huge 564 page compendium of inside information, it draws from interviews with an astonishing number of key figures, such as the chairman of Walt Disney Pictures and the Walt Disney Studio, the president of Hallmark Hall of Fame, the president of PorchLight Entertainment, the producer of the Simpsons, the producers of *Independence Day*, *Free Willy*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *The Lion King* and *Beauty and the Beast*, the director of *The Passion of the Christ*, the scriptwriter of *Finding Nemo* and *Toy Story*, the writer of *Braveheart*, the creator and executive producer of *7th Heaven*, as well as the actor who played its protagonist, the director of photography and cinematographer for *Crash*, iconic actors like Pat Boone and Jane Russell, right into contemporary talents like John Ratzenberger, veteran voice actor in every Pixar movie, as well as other producers, directors, screenwriters, songwriters, marketing and distributing executives, photographers, and on. In short, this book draws from a lifetime of insights and contacts by an author who is a long term Emmy-winning producer of literally hundreds of documentaries for PBS as well as the seminal CBS-TV production *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, which anticipated recent productions by decades.

Considering the five paradigms with which Christians have historically regarded culture observed by H. Richard Niebuhr in *Christ and Culture*, Ted Baehr, who holds degrees from Dartmouth College, New York University School of Law, and the Institute of Theology at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, considers the nature of each paradigm, but his ultimate goal is to follow “Christ the Transformer of Culture” (10), for, as he assures readers on the back cover of *How to Succeed in Hollywood*, “The Hollywood culture can be changed.”

To unpack this statement, he divides his book into two sections of six and seven chapters, respectively, preceded by a prayer, preface, and introduction, and followed by a conclusion, an epilogue (which is 1 John 5:10-12), a glossary, notes, and an index. The preface affirms the value of story, as a necessary form of cultural communication that reveals “the moral, philosophical, social, psychological, spiritual, and aesthetic messages the story conveys” (xv), and, therefore, what its worldview values. The introduction lays out clearly how the visual spinning out of stories



will be examined through a variety of informed sources. It also orients the exploration to follow by questioning readers who are interested in entering the film industry, on their motivation to do so, the value they assign to money, the level of their loyalty to God's way of living and working, their sense of responsibility toward the influence they will develop, their plan on how to resist the temptations they will face, and whether they will use the Bible as a guide to leaven the society they will enter or whether they will let that society leaven them. The introduction is excellent and, like the text that follows, filled with sage advice and a multitude of statistics, illustrations from films, and insights from insiders that support each point being made.

The first section is entitled "Foundations." Chapter 1 deals with the relationship between the church and the film industry, focusing its exploration of the mutual attempt to woo cooperation from each other in an examination of Niebuhr's paradigms for how the followers of Christ and those who inhabit the film culture should interrelate. This discussion segues into a succinct history of the connection between the performing arts and the church from the mystery or miracle plays of the Middle Ages (11) to film. Realizing that such a discussion ends inevitably in the need for a worldview on which one's actions are predicated, the author, who co-chaired an Art and Communications Committee for the Coalition on Revival to forge "The Christian World View of Art and Communication" sets out the committee's findings of what are necessary components for a Christian worldview of the Arts (12-15) and then contrasts those with "Hollywood's Pagan 'Theology' of Art" (15-16). Having set out these two bookends, he discusses thirty seven prominent religious movies from the silent seminal film *The Passion Play* (1897) to *The Nativity Story* (2006) and concludes by asking: "What Constitutes a 'Christian' Movie?" (25) What he sees at stake here is nothing less than the power of influence. Paraphrasing philosopher John Locke, he notes, "whoever controls the media controls the culture" (28), and for the next twenty three pages carefully examines that issue in regard to Hollywood, suggesting the kind of interpreting questions we need to bring to its productions and the values they are promoting. The skilled blending of data, quotation, scholarship, and examples from films and the lives of those who make them sets a model for the methodology he will continue to employ to explore the nuanced dimensions of Hollywood's impact on the thinking of a myriad of cultures. In addition to the schools at which he earned degrees, Ted Baehr also studied at Cambridge University, the University of Bordeaux and Toulouse, and the University of Munich, and currently lectures all over the world, so his vision is globally-oriented.

In the truest sense of the phrase, chapter 2 gets down to business. It begins by reminding readers that the movie industry is just that: an industry. It is not primarily aimed at communication or art, but at entertainment and making money, but the church is all about communication, as its goal is to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. This difference in priorities creates a tension that often resolves itself in peculiar ways. For example, we learn that neither the actor who played Eric Liddell nor the screenwriter of *Chariots of Fire* were Christians. The screenwriter, an agnostic, summarized the plot as a "couple of young fellows who put their fingers up to the world." Much of the backing money came from a Moslem who died in the car crash that killed Princess Diana, the producer was Jewish, and the only committed Christian was the actor who played the Jewish runner (54), yet this is one of the best loved and most honored of "Christian" movies. With that striking introduction, the author explores the building blocks of film, such as backstory, the sales pitch, the plot twist. The subtitle has promised this book is a "fieldguide" and chapter two examines both the crafting skills and the working values a Christian needs to parallel to produce films of the quality that can, indeed, bring about positive change of culture while they entertain, inform, make money, and edify.

Chapter 3 deals with discerning God's plan for one's life and whether it does or does not involve a career in film, and, if it does, how one can succeed in serving God. This chapter draws on first person experience from the insights of actress Donzaleigh Abernathy (daughter of Ralph

Abernathy), who, bathing her career in daily prayer, consciously forged a reputation for taking only “socially minded projects.” As she observes: “They knew I wouldn’t do any schlock. I only work on honorable movies with redeeming values” (93-94). She also notes that she chose a series of mentors from Sidney Poitier to Ruth Gordon to Gregory Peck, who advised her on every aspect of acting, so she could hone her skills. In addition, the chapter features the insights of seminarian turned writer, director, and producer Randall Wallace (“*Braveheart*,” “*The Man in the Iron Mask*”), who emphasizes the connection of clarity of faith and clarity of career vision. Chapter 3 ends with thirty three pages of hands-on exercises designed to discern one’s motivation and clarify one’s talent and, then, introduces readers to descriptions of jobs to explore that are commensurate with what one discovers about one’s gifts from doing the exercises.

Chapter 4 details the power of story to affect people positively or negatively. This chapter includes instructions on how to write effectively, reminding readers that “the average movie takes nine years from start to finish. *The Passion of Christ* took ten years. *Evita* took twenty-three years. *Batman* took seventeen years” (150). Helpful fill-out exercise pages, interviews with writers, and a step by step explanation of what comprises a successful script provide a large practical component to the chapter. The attention to story continues in Chapter 5, emphasizing the fact that moral Christian values drive the most successful movies. Chapter 5 includes charts that illustrate this fact, while also noting that certain genres succeed more than others, thus strong biblical values, wedded to science fiction or fantasy adventure, comedy, supernatural horror, and animated features take one “well on your way to making a blockbuster hit” (212).

Finally, section one ends with a careful discussion of the audience appropriateness of content, particularly the effect of violence on viewing children, but as well violence and pornography’s immediate effect on the thinking of adults as well as the aftereffects in their actions.

Section two invests its seven chapters in a “Step by Step” exposition of every facet of the industry. Chapter 7 introduces the aspects of producing a movie from pre right to post production. Chapter 8 tackles financing and the related area of how rights are handled as well as distribution, with extremely sage advice that reminds us that losing one’s money is as simple in Hollywood as going broke in a glitzy casino (265-275), since the film industry is like a fraternity that routinely hazes outsiders. Chapter 9 features hands on exercises to fill out on breaking down every aspect of making a film and includes illustrations of storyboards, daily schedule charts of filming days, descriptions of behind camera jobs. This chapter alone is worth the price of the book. Chapter 10 goes into every aspect of production, including how to conduct rehearsals, how to chart camera shots and other camera advice, lighting, graphics, audio, locations, and on. Chapter 11 explores post production issues including music and sound, editing, distribution and sales, but contextualizes all of these tasks, as do the previous chapters, within the worldview of a vibrant, living Christianity that bends all activity toward the goal of serving Christ. Chapter 12 examines the roles of director and actor, and illustrates its points with interviews with John Ratzenberger of Pixar and Morgan Brittany, who reminds readers that “I have two children who can see everything I’ve ever done, and they have nothing to be ashamed of or hide from their friends. They don’t have to say, ‘My mom did *Playboy*, or this sleazy movie.’ In my twenties these things were all thrown at me. I had no kids, no husband, but I looked into the future and said, ‘If I make this choice, the consequences will never go away’” (428-429). As with the myth in academia, that one needs to compromise one’s beliefs in certain fields to gain a Ph.D., the myth that one needs to sully oneself to advance a career in film is exploded by the success of each of the Christians interviewed who have achieved success without selling themselves out. We are counseled that one needs to “die to ‘rich and famous’” (432), if one is to live for Christ and follow the Lord’s calling in film or, really, in any profession. On a personal note, I recognized Morgan Brittany’s name, not from her role on “Dallas” (which I have never seen), but for her role in *The Prodigal*, which I thought was one of Billy Graham’s most memorable movies. The chapter ends with Morgan Brittany’s example of how

to “help the Christian projects” (433), and the insights of actors Stephen Collins (“7th Heaven”) and Jane Russell (whose brooding portrayal in “*The Outlaw*” has become iconic). Finally, chapter 13, “Movers and Shakers,” takes a look at the dynamics that drive the industry by drawing on the insights of a variety of major players whose insights serve as a kind of summary of all the practical advice that has transpired.

The conclusion summarizes the spiritual perspective that has motivated this book, gives tools for further study, and ends with encouragement grounded in facts that faith expressed through talent and skill does succeed in Hollywood. A helpful glossary of terms, endnotes, and an index complete this unique production.

Renowned today as the definitive tracker of movies who assigns the ratings accepted by some 50 million subscribers worldwide in all his *Movieguide*’s many forms, Ted Baehr is a major figure who has invested much effort to produce a master work that is essential reading for anyone touched by the power of television, the megaplex, Netflix, etc., which is many of us around the world, as well as our students, our parishioners, our neighbors. Every school, every church, in fact, every home with a television set, or a DVD player, or a computer should have this book available in its library. In our increasingly visual world where opinions are being formed by images, it is indispensable reading.

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